

SEVEN DAYS

FUNNY MONEY

Following the
gov's finances
PAGE 12

Two Against A TOWN

Will a lesbian couples
Adoption lawsuit prove
harassment or sour grapes?

SEE MATHSINFLAGS - PAGE 30



NET BENEFITS

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SWEET SUCCESS

PAGE 407

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The skinny



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MUSHRUM BOBBER
 8pm - 11pm (12 cover)
IMPASSION GINGER JAM
 1pm - 10pm
 Live 12pm
 10pm - 11pm
OLD-TIME MUSIC
 5:30 - 9:30pm
WILSON ROAD
 9pm - 11pm

FRIDAY
ROCK MUSIC WITH
RAPHAEL STAR (12 cover)

10:00pm - 11:00pm
12:00pm - 1:00pm

THURSDAY
GREEN DRINKS
 8pm - 10pm
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 by CMG

WEDNESDAY
KEVIN KIDZ C&S
 10:00 - 11:00pm
 12:00 - 1:00pm
 12:00 - 1:00pm

JOHN RANCO'S
NOVEMBER 10th
KEVIN KIDZ C&S
 10:00 - 11:00pm
 12:00 - 1:00pm
 12:00 - 1:00pm

THURSDAY
JOHN KIDZ C&S
 10:00 - 11:00pm
 12:00 - 1:00pm

FRIDAY
THE BROTHER
MACHINES
 8pm - 10pm

SATURDAY
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AN EVENING WITH MOLLY RINGWALD

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, AT 7:30 PM

Star of iconic '80s films, Broadway shows, and another Molly Ringwald has moved from The Breakfast Club to the Jazz Club! Enjoy an evening with Molly and her jazz quartet as she performs standards from her album, "Except... Sometimes," her homage to the Great American Songbook.



See what just a baritone can do!
-HAYMAISON POST

NEARLY LEAR – SUSANNA HAMNETT

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 10:00 A.M.

A one-woman tour de force, actress and clown Susanna Hamnett retells the great and tragic story of King Lear from the personal perspective of the king's fool, Nann. Winner of the 2012 International Performing Arts for Youth (IPAY) Victor Award for Outstanding Production, presented in collaboration with the Flynn Center for the Arts.



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My daughter has to walk from Lower Pine Street to South Winooski for after-school care in this weather... She is 7.

They disagree: "You have no clue what it is like to drive a 40,000-pound 40-foot-long out-of-control piece of equipment on a 10-foot-tall trailer through residential traffic in up to 100 miles per hour with maybe 50 minutes out of the trailer to get a gallon for the bathroom," hoping there is no live fire. "Ever wonder why some drivers wear a 100-pound ECM? Management has a policy of constant rain and it rains past the constant regularity just breaks you down and demoralizes you. It needs to change and now is the time." These drivers need the support of the community.

Community Notice: I do not support the Bus Drivers. If they were telling us they would work better as long as definitely neither and neither less for their efforts. And they cannot go on strike against their co-ops. Many other people work harder and longer hours with no more rest breaks in the middle of the day. I cannot feel sorry for those abusing other people. They have it good and do not realize it. They are just dumping on the hardworking people of Christendom.

Juan M. Garcia Urbina: It is frustrating on this side. I must wait for a ride to get to work, and I guess to get back. I also have a job interview for the summer at 2:30 p.m. I am wondering how I am going to make it. However, I support the bus drivers. They need more food and better conditions. They are very kind and helpful.

Jeremy Polster: I collect in [abroad] because I cannot afford a crib and don't have a co-sitter that I can rely on. I'm not sure I'm still going to have a job. Vermont is awful, will state so I could be fined for something that is out of my control.

No Fare!

After weeks of threatening to walk off the job, Utah residents of the County Transit Authority strike did—first thing Monday morning. The regional bus driver showed no sympathy, rather than a few dollars' worth of cash. The strike was a major victory for the union, which had been fighting for a pay raise and better working conditions for the 10,000 employees of the CTA. The strike was a major victory for the union, which had been fighting for a pay raise and better working conditions for the 10,000 employees of the CTA. The strike was a major victory for the union, which had been fighting for a pay raise and better working conditions for the 10,000 employees of the CTA.

discouraging the less devout
gigged in Church Street. The
order was issued on Tuesday

facing facts



OUT OF JOINT
Aggrieved advocates
demand to know
why the poll lies.
Joe's reply: "There
was NO VOTING ON
any from Colorado
and Washington."
Translation:
no, it didn't.



HOPE TO IMPROVE
north Dartington.
says calls Vermont
Supreme Court
its methods
class creates
"safety concerns."
Justice Schofield
says. How will



CONCRETE CONCEPTS

A bookkeeper
pled guilty this
week to taking
\$200,000 from a
Woodstock motel.
Will Wisconsin
ever learn to be
less trusting?



500000

Childs says he always thought of himself as a serious person. That's why he's taking the most direct route to work.



That's the percentage of Vermonters who were employed in January, the Vermont Department of Labor announced this week. The state's unemployment rate is at its lowest point since 2007, naturally it's 4.6 percent.

TOP FIVE

Source: *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 93(463), 1303-1312.

- [illegible]



tweet of
the week:

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Due to the illegal medical
injection shown, Yukun, the Harman
Falls doctor, will be arrested.

Today they were hot, long, and noisy.

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[illegible]

farm cooking either the meal or the dessert each day for the family of eight. I have several handwritten recipes from both of these family institutions — some on the corner of a brown paper bag, the back of an envelope or the back of a letter — all of which are infused from being made several times, all precious pieces of my family's history.

Since my mother helped my father rebuild the cows, I became the baker in the house at age 9 and, even today, I continue to bake and pass out all "the goods" to my three daughters and their families. Even when my grandchildren visit, one of their favorite things to do is help me bake — just passing on the tradition!

I have printed off the Seven Days article and placed it in the original cookbook for one of my daughters to find when I hand down this precious cookbook to them.

Lenny Curtis
LENNYCURTIS@GMAIL.COM

FREEFROM TO SLAUGHTER

I enjoyed Kathryn Flagg's article about her experience with Green Pastures Market's



rabble slaughter unit ("A Gentle Riot," March 5). However, Vermonters have historically and solely slaughtered animals on-farm for generations without the benefit of food puzzling. \$225,000 mobile facilities that maintain nothing but low federal inspections. While I wish Mark Starks nothing but the best with his ambitious endeavor, let us not forget that the very assumption of the necessity for such infrastructure is an abomination of our severely soured rights with regard to how we feed ourselves. According to Flagg's article, many Agency of Agriculture officials acknowledge the existence of a so-called "black market" on farm-slaughtered meat. To

those consciously participating in that market, either as producer or consumer, I encourage you to remember that you're dealing in something far more important than meat and money. You're dealing in your freedom.

Ben Hewitt
CHART

KINDER AND EVEN MORE GENTLE

[Re "A Gentle Riot," March 5] Whenever I read the honest and emotional reflections of someone who has to slaughter their beloved farm animals for meat — the kind of reflections that Kathryn Flagg shared recently — I can't help but think back to when horses were butcher-gatherers. We never had a relationship with the animals we killed and ate back then; the practice of separating our days with animals and then using them slaughtered as a relatively recent phenomenon, one that grew up with farming. So of course slaughter day is hard for us — we who endured over tens of thousands of years with more distance from the animals we

ate. Does the sadness we feel mean it's wrong to take the lives of animals for meat? Some would say yes, but I don't think so. It just means we're human. And it's our humanity that is leading us to seek kinder, more humane ways of raising and processing farm animals. We should thank our ancestors for what it inspires us to do, and worry only when the sadness is no longer there.

Candace Abele
HOUTFELDER

Abele is founder and editor of the website Monoculture.org

RECEIVED IN P.O.

CORRECTION

In last week's Dead story, "Second Stricken, DownStreet Bats," restaurant owner Elena Gustavson claimed to have convinced Sterling College to stop using the services of Sodexo. The college never had a contract with that food-service company. We also gave Gustavson credit for helping to launch Sterling's sustainable agriculture degree. That program predated her time at Sterling.

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then I don't get it.

David Thruwer
2/24/2012



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31 MAY 2012 3/30
RED 4/30 JANE WHITEHEAD 2ND 4/30
31 JUNE 2012 4/30
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31 JULY 2012 5/30
RED 6/30 JANE WHITEHEAD 2ND 6/30
31 AUGUST 2012 6/30
RED 7/30 JANE WHITEHEAD 2ND 7/30
31 SEPTEMBER 2012 7/30
RED 8/30 JANE WHITEHEAD 2ND 8/30
31 OCTOBER 2012 8/30
RED 9/30 JANE WHITEHEAD 2ND 9/30
31 NOVEMBER 2012 9/30
RED 10/30 JANE WHITEHEAD 2ND 10/30
31 DECEMBER 2012 10/30

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SATURDAY 22 & SUNDAY 23

TAPPED IN

From sap to syrup to super-an-snow, the Maple Open House Weekend celebrates Vermont's liquid gold at sugaring, equipment, throughout the state. Though modern equipment or with horse-drawn wagons and wood-fired evaporators folks of all ages experience — and taste — these time-tested traditions firsthand.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 61

③

TUESDAY 25

Fast Break

When the **Herman Eubank** takes the court, the iconic basketball team elevates the sport to a theatrical spectacle. Bringing comedy, drama and athleticism to *Team Rule*, *Offside* team members such as **Buckley**, **Flight Time** and **Tao Ties** dribble and shoot their way into spectators' hearts.

SEE CALIFORNIA LISTING ON PAGE 19

④

SLINDER 23

Page Turner

Whether it's a intergroup kind: soldiers all capers of Dr. Seuss or opposed of Burlington from years past, the Vermont Antiquarian Book & Epitaph Fair has something for everyone. Collectors, history buffs, scholars and bibliophiles get a look out of rare and out of print titles and other links to the literary past.

SEE CALSCHEDULE LISTING ON PAGE 87

⑤

SLINDER 23

Be Kind, Rewind

Messages for the annual VHS tapes? Mark Hughes and Joe Peckitt suit up. For more than 20 years, the club has become a member of the **Football Fanzine Festival** have online led videotapes from their stories, garage sales and the occasional *disrupter*. Games from *William Thorne* have also made their way to the big screen.

DOI: 10.1002/for

⑥

FRIDAY 21

Going the Distance

John Lund is an embowed guy. After completing marathons in 49 states and the 19 Canadian provinces, he set his sights on running 20 states in each of the seven continents. Reaching his next towns in Toronto, on the South Atlantic, the northern coast and a republican state, the little has he met along the way.

SEE CALCULATIONS ON PAGE 17

⑦

ENCLOSURE

Pale Scale

With a Market of fresh snow-stomping the ground winter shows no signs of leaving anytime soon. While these conditions cause some Vermonters to savor Mother Nature, the folks in **"White Mud"** take inspiration from this white uncertainty for the review of the S.P.A.C.E. Gallery works at various media explore the potential of winter hues.

2002. 18/04/02 09:00:00: 740

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SATURDAY 22
Brass Attack

When he was 12 years old, **Blair David Andrews** picked up the drums for the first time. In the chaotic chaos, the 14-year-old New Orleans-based performer has converted his place in a pop band in the bass drumming. He brings the best of the Big Easy to the **Rocky Roll** with beats from the **Rocky Roll** (Andrews).

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Asked last month about his campaign for a third term, Gov. Steve Shumlin responded the way he usually does: with an air of pensive nonchalance.

"Believe it or not, I don't wake up in the morning thinking about a re-election campaign," he said at a Montpelier press conference. "I'm not focused on fundraising for my campaign."

Well, someone on Thru Shumlin sure is. On Monday, the gov announced he'd raised nearly \$129,000 in the past eight months, putting his campaign war chest a smidge over the million-dollar mark.

Just as important for Shumlin, the only potential challenger to file a mandatory fundraising and spending report by Monday's deadline was former Republican state auditor and senior banker **DAVID BAKER**, who Shumlin loudly defeated in 2012. And Baker's own report only included expenses related to his last campaign.

Despite his claims to the contrary, the governor gave clearly at least one fundraising, his thingy shovels — and that has a lot to do with his dearth of opponents. On the very morning Shumlin uttered his "I don't wake up in the morning" remark, his campaign sent an email blast to its list of supporters asking for "\$50, \$125 or \$500" contributions.

A mere six days before that, Shumlin had traveled to DC for a suite of fundraisers headlined by the Democratic Governors Association, including one featuring President Barack **OBAMA**. While in town, Shumlin pulled up checks addressed to his own campaign account, totaling at least \$16,000, according to Monday's filing.

Two days before, he took an unannounced trip to Boston, where he met with several key state donors at Rella, an upscale Italian joint in the South End. Shumlin's campaign raised in at least \$11,000 that day. And Rella didn't do too bad either. The tab came to \$112.26.

Indeed, the tally from Shumlin's latest fundraising report is that the majority of his campaign cash comes from big-money donors who live outside Vermont. Many of them contributed the maximum allowed by law, which is \$2,000 this cycle, while still others circumvented those limits by giving through their companies and family members.

More interesting than how much Shumlin raised, however, is how little he spent on fundraising during those same eight months, just \$3,897.31.

By leveraging this list of donations of the DGA, the gov managed to build fund-raising from DC to Las Vegas to San Francisco without spending a dime of his own campaign cash. Pretty much his only campaign expense during that time were cell phone bills, online processing fees and \$9,000 at

payments to fundraiser **JOANNE ZACCORTI**.

The rest — arties, hotel rooms etc. — came courtesy of the DGA, which raises most of its money through five- and six-figure donations from big corporate and union donors.

For instance, on November 15 Shumlin's official appearance schedule listed him at, "In New York City for DGA." When Seven Days inquired about his activities at the time, DGA spokesman **DANIEL RANNEY** said that Shumlin "will be in New York for a

SHUMLIN MANAGED TO HOLO FUNDRAISERS FROM D.C. TO LAS VEGAS TO SAN FRANCISCO WITHOUT SPENDING A DIME OF HIS OWN CAMPAIGN CASH.

fewer hours" and that the DGA would cover his travel expenses.

"Discussing with prospective donors," Ranney elaborated.

That very day, according to Shumlin's most recent filing, the governor managed to raise \$16,000 for his own campaign. The day before, he took an another \$4,500 from New Yorkers. Among the donors? High-powered lobbyist **BARBARA ROBERTS**, real estate exec **FRANKLIN WILKINS** and Universal Remote Control founder **CHADWICK PACE**, who's contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to organizations devoted to, um, getting more out of pajamas.

Oh, and let's not forget **JOANNE ZACCORTI**, the real estate tycoon whose company's Lower Meriden park played host to the Olympic World Street court more than two years ago. Zaccorti and her wife, Susan, each donated \$1,000 to the Shumlin campaign that day — an odd four companies affiliated with Zaccorti's Brooklyn Financial Properties. Three other Zaccortis — John Andrew, Margaret and Mike — each contributed a featured spot to Shumlin in the two months that followed.

So all of these donors just happen to clip the gov a check at a "Vermont fundraiser" headlined by the DGA? Or was it actually a Shumlin for Governor fundraiser, paid for by the DGA if the latter — according to Vermont law, it would have to be reported as an in-kind contribution to the Shumlin campaign.

It was not. Perhaps telling, none of those who contributed to Shumlin's campaign that day contributed to the DGA, according to

that organization's 2013 IRS filing.

The Shumlin campaign did not respond to requests for comments. Assistant Attorney General **JEFF JACOBSON-CAMERON** declined to weigh in on the situation.

Earlier this month, Shumlin's political apparatus and the DGA appear increasingly linked. The governor's former chief of staff, **WES LLOYD**, serves as a senior advisor to the DGA and continues to advise him. And, Wolding Shumlin's longtime fundraiser, left her job in deputy labor commissioner in December to become a finance consultant for both the DGA and the Shumlin campaign.

That raises the question of whether Wolding spends money on Shumlin's behalf through the DGA, which does accept unlimited contributions, with the understanding that such money would be invested in Shumlin's campaign if the going gets tough this fall. The DGA spent more than a million dollars backing the gov's first run for office in 2000.

There's no shortage of donors who play in both arenas.

Billionaire hedge fund manager **TOM STREYER**, for instance, contributed \$250,000 to the DGA at the end of last year. Streyer, a staunch conservative, has pledged to spend more than \$100 million on Democratic campaigns this season, prompting some pundits to refer to him as liberal version of the Koch brothers.

Streyer has also poured thousands to Shumlin's reelection campaign. According to the governor's latest filing, Streyer and his family spent nearly \$5,000 entering a San Francisco fundraiser for Shumlin on September 30 — the day he was scheduled to be heading back to Vermont from a trip to China and Vietnam. The gov's campaign collected more than \$200,000 from beneficiaries at the days leading up to the Streyer fundraiser.

While Shumlin also looks against U.S. Supreme Court rulings that weakened the nation's campaign finance laws, he seems to see nothing wrong with flagrantly donating Vermont's own limits.

Like Zaccorti, several other Shumlin donors have exceeded Vermont's current limit of \$1,000 per donor, per election cycle.

On the day Shumlin traveled to DC last month, Massachusetts state clerk **BRUCE KUCH JR.** gave the governor \$2,000 from his own checkbook — and two more contributions of the same amount from a trust and an LLC. Last July, Kuch's father, Ernie Sr., gave another \$2,000, in debt before of New England, which is owned by the family.

Also in DC, billionaire health care executive **ARON W. BROWN** and his wife, Joyce, gave Shumlin's campaign at least \$10,000 through various entities they control. These made his fortune as the owner of First National Bank of Florida and appears to own property in Vermont.

Another multi-donor in **ARIEL DUNDE** who co-owns *My Peak Resort* and *Storke Mountain*, and is engaged in the \$400 million *Northeast Kingdom Economic Development Initiative*.

Last Wednesday, the Florida-based businessman gave Shandria \$2,000 from his own pocket and another \$8,000 from his Miami company he controls *Quore's business partner, HUI TAYSON*, donated \$2,000 last November.

Last year, Stenger and Quinn paid to fly Shandria to Miami and Asia to drum up foreign investors for their development projects through the RIA-5 investor visa program. In fact, Shandria was returning from such a trip when a judge held his son Prasenjit in default last September.

Stenger's most recent campaign contribution came last November, when he was arrested in a downtown Washington fundraiser **more money**.

That event, which included many of the state's top business leaders, brought in at least \$36,000, according to Shandria's latest filing. That's not including the \$8,000 the extended Miller clan donated on a single day last month, nor the \$1,000 Bobby Miller's wife, Kelly, spent raising the November event.

What was Shandria's interest when Steven Dwyer caught wind of the Miller fundraiser last December?

You guessed it: "As you can imagine, I'm focused on governing the state of Vermont, not raising funds."

Asked at the time who else was holding fundraisers on his behalf, Shandria in that document, saying that it would be clear when he filed his next fundraising report.

Pressed, Shandria finally agreed, saying he would be happy to tell you exactly when I had fundraisers when the next reporting deadline arrived.

So did he? No.

Asked last week whether the governor would honor his commitment, holding said that the legally required campaign finance filing "is all I see the campaign will have for you on this." She and other Shandria staffers agreed repeated requests for an explanation, nor would they put the governor on the phone with Steven Dwyer.

Perhaps he was busy governing. Oh, wait. He's an inmate in **Dominion**.

Justice Served

Shandria isn't the only one relying upon out-of-state donors to fill his campaign coffers.

Democratic Attorney General **PAUL CORNELL** took every last dime of the \$26,000 he raised in the past eight months from people outside the Green Mountain State. And, like Shandria, he did the bulk of his fundraising at events sponsored by a partisan national political organization — in his case, the Democratic Governors' Association.

You may remember DAGA from August 2002, when a super PAC it financed spent \$250,000 on an ad campaign supporting Cornell over fellow Democrat **PAUL STANGOR**, the Champlain County state attorney.

Nearly all of Cornell's contributions that came around came from DAGA's membership, which includes national attorneys, lobbyists and former attorneys general. Cornell says he "pushed" around supporters soliciting contributions at DAGA's December meeting in DC and held a fundraiser at its January meeting in Orlando. DAGA pays for Cornell's airfare and lodging when he attends its events.

So why exactly are DAGA's members so keen on talking to Vermont's attorney general?

"By and large, they represent clients or organizations who in consultation with AGs," he explains. "They get to talk with AGs in social settings or open or not, panels on issues. And frequently a matter will come up and they will ask for a meeting to discuss."

For example, Cornell explains, former Mississippi attorney general **MIKE MOORE** and former Washington State attorney general **JOE ROBERTS** joined the Vermont at the Orlando fundraiser. Moore donated \$1,000 to Cornell's campaign that day, while Roberts' firm donated \$900 a week later. Then the two asked for a meeting in Vermont to discuss their opposition to e-cigarettes, which Cornell opposed.

"I'm sure someone was paying them to be there and have the meeting," Cornell says. "But these are people who I've turned with and are friends of mine. And I'm not for sale for \$900."

While it may look like it, Cornell estimates, "it's not a pay-to-play situation. If there was some other AG who didn't contribute to my campaign and asked for a meeting on an issue, I typically take those meetings."

OK, but is it appropriate to accept campaign contributions from those who may be seeking support from the Vermont Attorney General's Office?

"I've got a very clear conscience," Cornell says. "They move as AG circles. They interact with AGs on behalf of clients."

"I don't think there's an AG in the country who's tried to limit the influence of big money in politics more than I, including anyone all the way to the Supreme Court," he adds, referring to his failed attempt in 2008 to defend Vermont's strict campaign finance limits. "I wish there was less money than there is on our political campaigns." ☺

INFO

Letters to Paul: Paul@sevendaysvt.com or 10 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 602 AM
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NMC

Unholy Plan? Proposal to Convert Church Property to Apartments Stuns South End Parish

BY ALICIA FREIRE

By now, most people know it's time to break up our next message. This month, a Catholic parish learned a similar lesson. If you're considering selling church property to a developer, tell your parishioners before they find out on social media.

For the last 55 years, Marie Benavent, 74, has been a parishioner at the St. Anthony Church on Flynn Avenue. Her deceased husband was baptized there, as were the couple's five children. The lives two blocks away and, over the years, has helped organize musical shows, fundraisers and covered dish suppers to raise money for the parish.

So it was with some indignation that Benavent read a Facebook post in late February, in which a neighbor described a plan to convert much of the church property into a four-story "lively housing project."

She calls the church complex a "part of our parish history, our neighborhood history, our family history. It's an extension of my home." The news, Benavent added, "should not have come as a surprise from city hall and social media."

St. Anthony's sits on a two-acre lot off Pine Street. The church was built in 1962 with land gifted from a Catholic church on Archdale Street. Many of its earliest parishioners were French Canadian workers at the Queen City Cotton mills in Burlington's Lakeside neighborhood. The building boasts a 15th-floor old ball and four stained glass windows that were also taken from the older church. Its elegant windows and vaulted ceilings make walking inside "like going back in time," said Charles Collett, an occasional churchgoer. Next to it are two buildings: the rectory and the parish hall. According to city records, the total property value is assessed at \$2.8 million.

Now, the city's development review board is considering a proposal to raze the rectory and the parish hall — both of which are on the Vermont State Register of Historic Places — to construct an apartment complex with 52 units and 72 parking spaces.

The proposal was filed with the DBH on February 6, assigned by Pitzagalli Properties and the Rev. Richard O'Donnell, better known as



The proposed apartment complex, shown next to St. Anthony Church.

"Father Rich." O'Donnell is the pastor of a merged parish of St. Anthony's and Christ the King churches.

A round of notice letters the DBH sent to immediate neighbors had a swift and seismic impact in the South End, reverberating across kitchen tables and online. By now many residents have seen the architectural mock-ups, which show the church, flanked by an L-shaped building and a sprawling parking lot.

O'Donnell said he regrets the way his parishioners heard the news — "I do feel bad. I did not communicate that to the parish in a timely manner" — but he didn't think it made sense to share a plan that might not pan out. O'Donnell emphasized that selling the church to Pitzagalli is by no means a deal set in stone.

But it's no pie-in-the-sky plan, either. The Roman Catholic Diocese isn't exactly drowning in cash these days and has had to contend with other challenges, including a shortage of priests and a shrinking number of parishioners. The Christ the King St. Anthony parish has hosted the latter trend — according to O'Donnell, there's actually been an uptick in people attending mass at the two churches since he took over last July. He estimated that about 1,000 people attend one of the six weekend masses held at the churches.

But that doesn't compensate for more than a decade's worth of declines, he added.

Removing St. Anthony's is still an option, according to O'Donnell, but it comes with a price. "Whatever direction we go, financially, there are some very, very big concerns. Not only structural concerns in the building, but also the fact there's just the dip-to-day maintenance that is costing the parish a considerable amount of money we don't necessarily have."

O'Donnell said he doesn't know yet what the renovation costs for all three buildings would be, but a preliminary estimate showed the church alone needs roughly \$1 million in upgrades.

He said he's been explaining both options — to renovate or sell — since late last fall. Once the plans are finalized, three committees, made up of parishioners, will review them and present them to the parish as a whole. After collecting their feedback, a proposal will go before the Burlington Diocese for its approval.

Selling the St. Anthony site would eliminate overhead costs, and the sale proceeds would be reinvested in the parish, according to O'Donnell. One possibility, he said, would be to send more money to the school at Christ the King, which he described as "thriving."

But that's little comfort to those who

live close by St. Anthony's, for whom a massive apartment complex is a much less desirable neighbor than a quiet church.

"It's a big, ugly monstrosity," said Marilyn Grigas, whose house is on the other side of Pine Street from St. Anthony's.

Despite O'Donnell's reassurances, many community members say they think it's a done deal, based on the level of detail in Pitzagalli's proposal. Margo Truitt's upstairs bedroom overlooks the church property. She's lived there for 22 years and said she loves her house and neighborhood. But after learning the news, she said, "I just feel like running for the hills."

Truitt, a real estate agent, won't make any statements. Shortly after she learned of the development plan, she started printing out letters for available properties elsewhere in Burlington.

Pitzagalli's proposal calls for closing two of the three vehicle entrances on the current property, which would funnel all traffic onto Ferguson Avenue, a relatively quiet street that runs parallel to Flynn Avenue and perpendicular to Pine. The documents filed with the DBH state that "little change in traffic congestion is anticipated," but residents and such an influx of people will inevitably drag the streets. Grigas predicts traffic "pouring out onto Ferguson."

For neighbors, the concern isn't just about what may be coming. For St. Anthony parishioners — many of whom

IT'S A BIG, UGLY
MONSTROSITY.

MARYLEEN GRIGAS

School Daze: Burlington Education Leaders Mull Another Budget Vote

BY KEVIN J. KELLEY

Burlington school officials remain torn over whether to ask voters again to approve an increase in spending — and taxes — for the coming year, or simply to default to the current year's budget.

Either way, worried school board member and finance committee chairman Keith Hillyard, school officials are going to have to make some difficult decisions about ways to save money. "There will be an impact on students," he said. "It will be painful."

The indecision stems in part from unpopularity. Year after year, city residents have approved the bills in school budgets and local property taxes proposed by the board, even though the increases were often far higher than the general rate of inflation. "The people of Burlington have been extremely generous to the schools," said Bob Abern, head of the Burlington teachers' union.

That decade long trend came to an end on March 6. A majority of voters in four of the city's seven wards said no to a proposed \$16.9 million school budget that would have raised the education property tax by 9.9 percent.

It might seem that school officials have little to lose by turning the proposed budget for fiscal year 2015 and trying to win approval in a special election. If the *disastrously* second spending plan failed, the city would default to the current year's budget — which would still carry a tax increase of about 7 percent.

There is another question of cost, however. Conducting a vote could run the city around \$30,000. The school board and central office must also consider the consequences of delaying decisions on proposed staff cuts. Some of the 48 teachers threatened with job losses under the default budget might take positions outside the Burlington district rather than wait to see if the district finally, and unexpectedly, Jeanne Collins. "Whatever decision is taken, it should happen sooner rather than later," she advised.

The school board will undergo a major shift in personnel next month. All three incumbents who faced opponents on Town Meeting Day lost their re-election. In addition to those successful challengers, three other nominees will be joining the board, with the result that nearly half its voting members will have no previous



BOB ABERN

experience with budgeting for the Burlington School District.

A few current and incoming board members oppose a re-vote on the grounds that it would further alienate taxpayers and inevitably bring a second rejection. "The district doesn't have any political capital left in the bank," said Scott Shumski, an opponent of the 9.9 percent increase who headed an incumbent Ward 4 school commissioner on Town Meeting Day.

Board chairman Alan Metson said that "both sides make strong arguments" in regard to the re-vote option. The board shouldn't decide on whether to hold a re-vote, he suggests, until the public has a chance to express its preferences through a public hearing. And that hearing must elicit broadly representative views. He added, noting that in public comment sessions prior to Town Meeting Day "everyone who spoke and you can't cut certain things from the budget. And then the voters said they wanted things taken out of the budget."

Bernie O'Rourke, the commissioner who lost to Shumski in Ward 4, favors a re-vote as a potential way of limiting the cuts affecting students. "Yes, we've had some pretty big increases," O'Rourke



JEANNE COLLINS

said of past budgets. But, he noted, "We have some pretty big needs."

Due to the city's sizable immigrant population, Burlington schools face greater challenges than ones in other Vermont districts. Much of Burlington's growth in spending has been driven by the costs of special education and English-language learning programs. Defenders of the 16.9 million budget also point out that students with special needs in Burlington while it has shrank in many other districts.

Still, Shumski argued, the growth in spending has been excessive. The Burlington school budget has risen more than 30 percent in the past five years, he said, while student enrollment increased just 23 percent over the same span.

Officials would have to concentrate cuts in a small slice of the budget if the board opted to retain all 400 of the district's teachers — thereby keeping class sizes at their current ratios, said Metson. Personnel costs, largely determined by union contracts, and state-mandated programs account for about 80 percent of Burlington school spending. In order to achieve an overall 1 percent budget reduction, it would be necessary to cut the non-mandated 20 percent of



ALAN METSON

expenditures by 10 percent, Metson calculated.

That would likely involve eliminating or curbing some after-school programs, including sports. Collins noted the district's full-day kindergarten program as another candidate for cutting because the state requires only half-day K. But she would be reluctant to take that step. Metson predicted, because "it's understood there's no more important time for education than the early years."

David Kirk, a newly elected commissioner in Ward 7, said that "some of the first-grade programs may have to take a hit." That could include the firm to school food project, Kirk said. And Collins acknowledged that officials might have to slow down or halt the "one-to-one initiative" under which every middle school and high school student — and their teachers — will eventually get a computing device.

Collins' recent announcement that 48 teachers and nine administrators may lose their jobs to save money was required under union contracts, she said. But officials may not have to cut that many jobs regardless of the outcome of the budget deliberations. "I will do everything I can to make it less than that," she said. "I'm going to look every where I can other than the classroom."

The announcement of possible layoffs was an "overreaction," said Richard Hillyard, a critic of Burlington school budgeting practices. "When you say,

THE DISTRICT DOESN'T HAVE ANY POLITICAL CAPITAL LEFT IN THE BANK.

SCOTT SHUMSKI

EDUCATION

"Oh, we didn't get the budget through, so we have to cut 68 teachers and nine administrators," it has to be asked. "Why did you approve a 12 percent increase for teachers a few months ago?"

Hillyard was referring to the three-year salary deal negotiated by the district and the Burlington Education Association — the local chapter of the Vermont teachers' union. That pay hike served to pull Burlington teachers into the middle range of compensation rates among Chittenden County districts, noted union leader Abbey. "No one wants Burlington teachers to be lowest on the scale — and for teachers to start off in Burlington and then move to a better-paying district after a few years," he said.

The union agreed to a few concessions in exchange for the 12 percent pay package, Abbey added. Most notably, Burlington teachers will work one extra day each year.

Abbey suggested the board look for savings in the central office and in some after-school programs. The budget was rejected primarily because "others didn't understand what the additional money was needed for," she said. Burlington taxpayers "weren't getting the money they wanted" from the central office.

The Burlington board's ability to set the board on taxpayers is further cramped by state actual financing mechanisms. Less than one third of the 9.9 percent tax increase proposed on Town Meeting Day was attributable to local decision making. Most of the hike resulted from state formulas over which Burlington school commissioners have no control.

So is it time for the legislature to nix school funding mechanisms, given that budgets were deflated in votes across the state?

Yes, said Ward 4 commissioner Ben Triguera, a former state legislator. "The state has to act."

Marcia Allen, president of the Vermont Teachers' Association, agrees that the legislature "should take a look" at the funding provisions that have produced statewide tax hikes significantly above the inflation rate in many recent years. But, Allen cautioned, those provisions were put in place for sound reasons.

"We have one of the most equitable funding systems for public education in the United States," the union chief said, referring to the two landmark laws — Acts 60 and 68 — aimed at equalizing educational opportunity throughout Vermont.

Allen doesn't think the legislature needs to tinker anything through. She noted, "The school budgets did pass in 85 percent of districts" on Town Meeting Day.

Janet Ansel, the Cabot Democrat who chairs the Ways and Means Committee, said her tax-writing panel had been debating changes in education financing prior to Town Meeting Day. In its aftermath, there may be more momentum for a still-loosely sketched proposal to reduce reliance on property tax by diverting a portion of actual funding from the state income tax, Ansel said. However, nothing would be finalized in time to affect next year's budgets.

Even as the legislature ponders whether to adjust the financial underpinnings of schools around the state, local districts may wish to consider structural changes of their own, said Burlington board chairman Matusz.

Hillyard, the school spending critic from Ward 1, said he's "bullheaded" that a \$67 million spending plan is down on and overruns by cost-cutting. Matusz didn't use that word, but he also didn't disagree with Hillyard's remark.

The 36-member Burlington board, made up of two commissioners from each of the city's seven wards and two serving student representatives, consists of "volunteers who are largely self-selected," Matusz said. Would-be or incumbent school commissioners seldom face competition at the ballot box. The uncompensated job involves long hours spent on nonbudgeted topics.

Matusz is a certified financial consultant, but few others on the board have much background in fiscal issues.

"There's no one looking out to ensure we get all the skill sets we need," he said. One possibility might be to establish a regional oversight mechanism that could ensure more effective scrutiny over school budgets and expenditures. "It's not in my own interest to say this," Matusz concedes. "But there it is."

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Two Years After a Taser Death, a Reform Bill Comes Under Fire

BY MARK GAVIN

When an unarmed, mentally ill man died after being shot by a "stun-wrenching" Vermont state trooper in June 2012, members of the public and many officials responded with outrage and calls for reform.

Advocates for the mentally ill pushed for stricter rules and training for officers who carry stun guns. The Attorney General's Office held public hearings, as did a police advisory board. More than 300 lawmakers from both political parties sponsored a bill that they said was a direct response to the death of 39-year-old Matthew Mason at his Thetford home. Just nearly two years later, the bill has changed in how Vermont police officers use stun guns. And the primary effect is being changed—a filibuster passed at House Governance Operations Committee last week and seemed poised to clear the House as of press time—was so watered down that some of the committee members who approved it unanimously questioned how effective it would be.

"I wanted to see something much stronger," State Rep. Joanna Cole (D-Burlington) said during a hearing last week.

"It was my impression that we were going to put out a bill that would change the status quo. And we are concerned that what we're going with this bill... that we would not see a reply of what happened to the gentlemen from Thetford," State Rep. Mike Townsend (D-South Burlington) said, having filed legislative members. She seemed to answer.

Supporters of the bill acknowledge that some provisions were dropped away that would have resulted in greater oversight of police stun-gun use. But they say the bill makes one crucial advance: For the first time, Vermont would have committed standards and training—to be conducted at the Vermont Police Academy—for officers who carry stun guns. Currently, most departments conduct their own training, based on their own rules.

"First, setting up the first training a policy that will be used statewide for training," said Donna Swasey (D-Windham), who is chair of the gov ops committee that crafted and passed the bill. "That is one of the important issues that we wanted to have happen."

But not everyone is concerned that what will be done to reduce questionable Taser deployments. Why? The bill essentially reduces into state law those policies that individual law enforcement agencies have used for years—policies



that critics say have allowed for excessive use of stun guns. Current standards at Vermont police agencies, mirrored by police agencies across the country, allow officers to use Tasers when they are simply at risk of injury, or when subjects are "actively resisting" police commands.

"I think the bill makes the situation worse... They're codifying a poor public policy," said defense attorney Robert Appel, the former head of the Vermont Human Rights Commission who has pursued litigation against police officers in use-of-force cases. "It's a green light to a police officer to use it any and every time they have any concern about them as the subject being hurt. It's a low level standard. I would rather see them do nothing than pass this language."

Rhonda Taylor, Mason's mother, also said she thinks the bill falls short of needed protection for children.

"I am so disappointed with the governor of Vermont, the Vermont attorney general, the Vermont State Police... and the Vermont legislature that in the matter of passing this vague, passive bill," said Taylor, a New Hampshire resident. "My struggle every day to survive the death of my son is extreme beyond words. I sincerely hope that no one else has to suffer the way we suffer and all of us loved ones here."

Tasers took center stage in June 2012, when Vermont State Police responded to a call that brought them to the home Mason shared with his girlfriend, Theresa Davidson. Mason had taken away a local hospital and threatened to harm himself and others. After suffering a brain seizure the night before, Mason was in an agitated and irrational state that doctors say is common among such patients. Davidson says she relayed that information to troopers and pleaded with them to leave Mason alone so that he could calm down.

Instead, a confrontation occurred, during which Trooper David Shaffer

ordered Mason to lie down on the ground. He didn't, and police say Mason began moving toward the trooper as a diversion tactic, using a closed fist. The trooper fired his Taser, striking Mason in the chest. He died of cardiac arrest.

Davidson's son said that Mason had raised his hands in surrender, and was not a threat to police.

Attorney General Bill Sorrell cleared Shaffer of criminal wrongdoing, saying the trooper was justified in firing the stun gun. But in announcing that decision, Sorrell said he would convene public meetings to discuss police use of Tasers and asked the state's law enforcement advisory board to study training protocols.

I THINK THE BILL MAKES THE SITUATION WORSE ... THEY'RE CODIFYING A POOR PUBLIC POLICY.

ROBERT APPEL

Meanwhile, more than 30 lawsuits proposed legislation that would have dramatically limited the conditions under which police could fire Tasers, which cost about 50,000 dollars of electricity to temporarily paralyze a target.

The law would have required police to use Tasers only when they felt their long-range stun batons were at risk, the standard that applies when officers face a traditional gun. The bill also would have required officers to take "steps to prevent unnecessary use" of stun guns against people who, like Mason, suffer from cognitive impairments that interfere with their ability to understand and follow police commands.

Both provisions were stripped from the final bill last week. In their place was

language that gives police broad discretion in deciding whether to fire Tasers—the kind of latitude they currently enjoy. The bill now says, in part, "officers are not required to use alternatives that increase the danger to themselves or the public" and that stun guns can be used "in response to an actively resistant subject."

Such language is included almost verbatim in existing policies long used by most Vermont police agencies, including the Burlington Police Department and the Vermont State Police.

How did a bill designed to include greater protections from stun guns for civilians end up simply repeating regulations long used by police? Inverness committee decided to defer to the work of another group that had been studying the Taser issue—the police dominated law enforcement advisory board.

The LEAB, created by the legislature in 2004, is charged with advising state of officials on law-enforcement priorities and improving coordination between police agencies. By law, 13 of its 12 members are law-enforcement officials and practitioners.

Since Mason's death, the board has worked with the Attorney General's Office to design uniform standards for Taser use, and to draw up plans for an officer Taser training program at the Vermont Police Academy (currently, Vermont police agencies, including the Vermont State Police, conduct their own training programs, which are based on curriculum from the manufacturer, Taser International).

The LEAB in fact, and existing policies from local police agencies in drafting its own statewide policy, which went back to Swasey, according to LEAB chairman Bill Gardner. Swasey, the committee chairwoman, acknowledged that the bill was rewritten to match the LEAB's draft policy. But she pronounced herself satisfied with the result.

But there are the very same policies that have made Taser so controversial in the first place. Of most concern to critics is the adoption of the "active resistance" standard for firing a Taser. The LEAB's current training protocols define "active resistance" as "pulling away, escaping or fleeing, struggling and not complying on physical contact, or other energy enhanced physical or mechanical defiance."

Active resistance has been at the heart of several questionable police Taser incidents, some of which occurred long before Mason's death.

It was the reason a Vermont State Police trooper gave in 2006 for firing a



David and Theresa Taylor

Taylor as a 19-year-old man who was suffering an epileptic seizure while police attempted to handcuff him. Another state trooper had the same justification for firing a Taser at a 23-year-old man with Down Syndrome who, when police tried to move him, refused to go along.

Both incidents led to lawsuits. The state paid \$400,000 to the Taylor man, and the man with Down Syndrome received an undisclosed sum of money from the state.

In 2012, Vermont Public Radio reported that Vermont State Police had fired Tasers at people attempting suicide or experiencing a mental health crisis 10 times in the previous 18 months. Mental health advocates say the people they represent are often thought to be "actively resistant" when they simply don't understand what police are telling them.

"To me, that doesn't justify the use of something that is potentially lethal Active resistance, in an individual with cognitive disabilities, it's an indication that they probably don't understand what [police] are trying to do," said Bill Piquet, executive director of Disabilities Rights Vermont. "They lay in the threshold of when it can be used. I don't think they should be used for things that are a matter of compliance. It should be clear that somebody has to be in danger before the thing should be used."

Similar questions have surrounded the use of stun guns by the federal Department of Justice generally supported the use of Tasers and similar devices to subdue subjects who didn't respond to other measures. However, it called for caution in dealing with people who, like Mason, were mentally unstable. "Whether mental status is a contributory or noncontributory, sometimes called 'tactical decisions' may be associated with a risk for sudden death. This should be treated as a medical emergency," the report stated.

Swaney said the push for increased, universal training will address many of the concerns. As with most legislation, she said, some lawmakers had to compromise in order to move the bill forward.

"We wanted to make sure the training was there," Swaney reflected. "These law enforcement agencies that

do use stun guns say the weapons have proven invaluable in reducing injuries, both to officers and civilians."

Police chiefs from three Chittenden County departments — Burlington, South Burlington and St. Albans — said in interviews that stun guns have led to fewer workers' compensation claims being filed by officers and a reduced number of confrontations with subjects who are more compliant when faced with a stun gun.

South Burlington Police Chief Trevor Whipple said he has received no complaints from civilians about Taser use since at least 2006. Meanwhile, his officers have fired and brandished the weapons less frequently every year, the more threat a /the weapons is usually enough to make subjects obey commands.

"They're a very valuable tool when used appropriately," Whipple said. "When it's needed, it's incredibly effective."

If the bill with increased training requirements passes, Whipple believes his officers, who received in-house instruction guided by Taser International, will likely be no different in compliance.

LEAF's Gaudreau indicated that many officers could be grandfathered in, but may have to receive annual re-certification from the Vermont Police Academy under a future program.

Gaudreau said the bill represented a good starting point in making police use of Tasers safe, but cautioned that there would always be some danger involved.

"What we're trying to do is give more guidance in scenarios," Gaudreau said.

The new legislation does include at least one new protection against potential police abuse that officers in South Burlington and elsewhere will have to remember. At the behest of State Rep. Linda Martin, the bill includes a provision banning officers from using stun guns on animals, unless officers feel their safety is threatened.

That won't do much for the next Weekend Mason.

"I'm not sure what you're accomplishing by passing it," mental health activist Laura Ziegler told lawmakers, "other than saying you did something." ☐

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OBITUARIES



Shirley Dunsblinn Berard

1924-2014 WINDSOR

Shirley Dunsblinn Berard passed away peacefully on Sunday, May 20, 2014, following a long life in family by her side. Born on June 29, 1924, in Windsor, Ontario.

She was predeceased by her husband, John, who passed away in 1994. She is survived by her son, John, and his wife, Mary. She was also predeceased by her mother, Mary, and her father, John. She was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. She was a devoted mother and grandmother. She was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. She was a devoted mother and grandmother. She was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.



Jean Brett

1927-2014 COLCHESTER
Jean Brett, of Colchester, passed away on March 12, 2014. She was born in 1927 in Windsor, Ontario. She was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. She was a devoted mother and grandmother. She was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.

wonderful memories of her parents, extraordinary friends, and family. As a young child, she attended Catholic school and developed a deep abiding faith in God which sustained her throughout her life. Jean attended Saint Bernard's Elementary School and the Academy of Mount Saint Vincent High School and finished University.

On November 15, 1952, Jean married William B. McCarthy at St. John's Church in New York City. They had seven children between 1953 and 1965. In September of 1967 her husband William died. In spite of this tragedy, Jean went to work and supported and successfully raised her children while supporting her father to ensure he had the best of care. Jean was a strong and resilient woman with a great sense of humor and adventure. She had that rare quality of accepting people for who they are and making people feel welcome and comfortable. Because of her wonderful character, her in-tegrity and her commitment to the people that she loved, she has a large support network of family and friends today.

In 1975, Jean moved to her home in Long Island, New York. She worked for the New York City Police Department as a woman detective where she was instrumental in ensuring equal pay for women and other minority rights issues. She retired in 1985.

In 2007, Jean had a stroke. Shortly thereafter her husband John died and the want to live with her daughter Kathleen and husband Charles (Pete) at Jacksonville, Florida. In 2012 she moved to Vermont to live with her daughter and son-in-law. Jean had many friends and loved nothing more than to spend time with her extended family and friends, particularly with her four exceptional grandchildren.

Jean is survived by her seven children and their spouses: Bernard (Teresa) Jem/Catherine; Marian McCosker/Peter; John/Kathleen; Catherine/Pauline;

John Sean (Kiki) and Francis (Dodie) her brother-in-law; Nicholas (Reggie) and Barbara (Barb) her sister-in-law; and her four grandchildren: Matthew, Nicholas and Reginald. Thomas McCarthy, Susan Mary (B.J.) and Madeline (Maddie) Jack (Cindy) Mary (Lorraine) and her many dear friends and neighbors.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Friday, March 14, 2014 at Christ the King Church in Burlington, VT. A memorial service was held on Monday, March 17, 2014 at Trinitarian Church in Tarrytown, NY. Online condolences may be shared with the family at [www.funeralhome.com](#). Arrangements are under the care of All Saints Funeral Home, Windsor, VT.



Jim Walsh, of Burlington, Vermont, passed away on March 14, 2014. He was born in 1924 in Windsor, Ontario. He was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. He was a devoted mother and grandmother. He was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.

James Leo Delisle Jr.

1938-2014 COLCHESTER

James Leo Delisle Jr., of Colchester, VT, passed away peacefully after a long and difficult battle with cancer on March 7, 2014, at the Regency House in Windsor, VT.

Jim, born in Burlington, Vermont on June 14, 1938, was the son of James and Mary Delisle. He was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. He was a devoted mother and grandmother. He was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.

position he served around the US. Delisle Jr. was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. He was a devoted mother and grandmother. He was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.

Jim was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. He was a devoted mother and grandmother. He was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.

Traditionally, new homes built in the 1950s were built with the collection of family carpenters, such as plumbers, electricians, and other tradesmen. Jim and Shirley were very proud of the home they built in 1958, and it was the greatest thing of many memories they shared.

Jim was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. He was a devoted mother and grandmother. He was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.

family and friends, looking back to the time when they were young and playing in the yard, and watching his grandchildren grow.

Jim was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. He was a devoted mother and grandmother. He was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.

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Allen Edward Menard

1952-2014 MELTON

Allen Edward Menard, age 61, passed away on March 13, 2014 at Melton Adams Hospital surrounded by his loving family.

Allen was born on May 3, 1952, to Scott Swearing and Edward Menard (later Menard). He was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. He was a devoted mother and grandmother. He was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.

Allen was a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society. He was a devoted mother and grandmother. He was also a member of the St. John's Anglican Church and the St. John's Anglican Society.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MENARD FAMILY

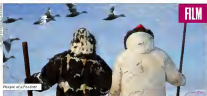
PHOTO BY JIM DELISLE

PHOTO BY JIM DELISLE

PHOTO BY JIM DELISLE

The Green Mountain Film Festival Returns With New Vigor and New Films

BY ETHAN DE BRUIE



People of a Feather



Looking from Within

The 2012 Toronto International Film Festival screened nearly 300 feature films, but you'd expect a number like that in a city of almost three million. By contrast, 64 features are playing at the 10-day **GREEN MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL**, which begins this Friday. Thinking per capita, that means one film for every 123 residents of Montpelier—a not even counting short films or special events. None of the big festivals can boast such a ratio.

It may not be gigantic, but the GMFF can boast a wide-ranging program of films from all over the world. The festival screens digitally at just a handful of venues, but its offerings will likely satisfy even the most demanding of Vermont cinephiles.

New to its 13th year, the GMFF is unlike other local film festivals in embracing any particular theme or purpose. **YANN YVES** is the president and acting director of the festival, as well as the owner of Montpelier's **SAVOIR VIVRE**, one of two of the festival's three main screening rooms. As he put it, "We don't have a social agenda or an environmental agenda. We're steeped in the art-house culture of film. If you see any line, it's to represent as many great films as we can from every genre."

Besides from every film this year's festival screenings are usually named or forgotten dishes, showcases of local filmmaking talent and a number of special programs. Among the events in the list category is a retrospective of the best of Soviet resident and acclaimed actor **URS GULMAN**, who will be in attendance. Other special programs include a panel discussion called "Creativity in the Digital Age" with speakers such as **NEWMARK PUBLIC TELEVISION'S** **HELENE REED** and recently announced Cartoonist Laureate of

Vermont **JOHN BROWN**, and a one-of-a-kind multimedia event with **largo virtuoso Bello Fleck**.

Yolk is particularly excited about the last event, which will include a screening of the documentary **Bello Fleck: How to Write a Recipe**, **Georgina**, a live performance and a discussion with Fleck. The unusual way in which the event came together epitomizes the festival's friendly vibe.

Yolk says Fleck performs in 2012 at Burlington's **PLAZA CENTRALE** for the **PERFORMANCE** series, where the largest, sleep-proofed a concerto (**Wolke** calls it "paw-draping") that he was then composing for the **Nashville Symphony**. Upon learning that the concerto was the subject of a new documentary, Yolk thought the film was a natural for the GMFF. As it happens, **MASS. NOVA**, the festival's director of special events, is a close friend of Fleck's stage manager. After a simple request from both, the musician is agreed to accompany the film to Montpelier.

Events featuring celebrities such as Fleck and Gulman may attract the most attention, but the GMFF's main strength lies in the diversity of its film programming. Films of note include **Elaine Stritch: Shoot Me**, a new documentary about the **lively Broadway legend**; **Paris**, the most recent feature from Russian master director **Aleksandr Sokurov**; and **Peter Bogdanovich's** first feature, the semi-obscure 1968 film **Targets**, which will screen in a restored version.

Several of the new films in the festival, including the Stritch doc and Don McMillan's **The Grand Seduction**, are

one-time-only events known as "singles." These screenings are win-win-win. Audiences get a chance to see films not yet in wide distribution, the film distributors get a chance to speak word of mouth and the festival gets little or no money to show significant works of current cinema.

If the GMFF appears robust now, two years ago it nearly dissolved when its board of directors resigned en masse. Though Yolk wasn't part of any single issue, he notes that when he stepped in as president, he decided to make a number of structural changes to the organization. "Truthfully," he says, "the way that the festival had been run previous to last year was pretty archaic. It was incredibly complicated, inefficient and expensive."

Since that 2012 shake-up, the GMFF has adopted a more-whole annual film selection process. Yolk is careful with his words when discussing this subject, but implies that an insufficient number of people made programming decisions in the past. Now, the festival has a "working group" with a membership hovering around 15 people, any of whom can suggest films. The use of a simple one-to-one rating scale experts a bit of mathematical rigor to the decisions. A non-person steering committee reviews the judgments of the working group and makes the final programming decisions.

ERIC REYNOLDS, the festival's (and the **Savoir**) programming coordinator, is an avid completer. He concurs with Yolk's assertion that the festival's mission is

simply to program the best possible films. In a phone conversation, Reynolds critiques about such films as *A Field in England* by Ben Wheatley (whose *Sightless* played at the 2011 GMFF), the double screening of George A. Romero's horror classic *Night of the Living Dead* and the documentary about that film, *Birth of the Living Dead*, and the recent period comedy *Computer Chess*.

Well, though — isn't that the same Computer Chess that's currently sitting in many a Netflix queue? If so, and Reynolds acknowledges that such competition does sometimes make things tricky for smaller film festivals. Still, he says, "Our audiences are interested in films that aren't the blockbuster of the week. They're interested in thoughtful and insightful films that deal with important subjects. It's a discerning crowd."

The festival is ambitious not just in its programming but in the scope of its exhibition. Less than a week after the GMFF wraps in Montpelier, **CONSUMERS** are in St. Johnsbury will host several "satellite screenings" (some of the films playing there will also have screened in Montpelier). But many events are unique to the Northeast Kingdom location, including the 8th annual High School Film Festival and several programs of 2012 Declassified short films.

Yolk is continually optimistic about the festival's financing on the black, especially since its operating as an approximately \$30,000 shortfall from last year, due in part to several donors withdrawing their contributions. He's been streamlining festival operations and "trying to do as much to finance us as we can."

But attendance may depend on factors beyond the control of even the most prepared festival director: Many people bag tickets when the skies are gray. "We're really hoping for hot weather," Yolk says. It's joking, but only partly. The Green Mountain Film Festival is both large and small enough to be sensitive to forces of all kinds. □

INFO

Green Mountain Film Festival: Friday through Sunday, 21 through Sunday May 20, at several locations in Montpelier. "Satellite screenings" take place Friday April 6 through Sunday April 6 at Claremont Arts in St. Johnsbury. Ticket prices vary, get them at www.gmff.org. To watch about the festival's whereabouts at the GMFF see the Seven Days blog Live Culture

Hick in the 'Hood Takes Audiences From Vermont to West Oakland

BY DIAM CHAND WAREN

After Michael Sommers has a hypothetical scenario that he uses to explain two types of place: "Say a guy gets a new car," he says. "Someone says, 'Hey Mike! That's a nice shiny new car you've got! A San Franciscan would say, 'Thank you! But a Vermonter thinks that person's giving it to him, really saying, 'Aren't you full of yourself?'"

On the surface, Sommers' current home in West Oakland, Calif., and his hometown of Middlebury, Vt., don't have much in common. West Oakland is an historically black neighborhood in the San Francisco Bay Area famous for being the birthplace of the Black Panther movement. Vermont is the second whitest state in the country, and Addison County is known even within the Green Mountain State for its back-to-the-land, agrarian vibe.

But Sommers doesn't see it that way. The actor, now in his late forties, tells a story that defies stereotypes—including racial ones—in his one-man show, *Hick in the 'Hood: A Vermont Boy in West Oakland*, which he spent the past three years crafting. It's the tale of Sommers' sometimes shaky but ultimately positive transition to West Oakland, where he moved in 2006. The show has already gotten positive feedback from Bay Area audiences at the Marsh in San Francisco and the Duane Palace in Point Reyes Station, among other venues.

This month, Sommers brings the show home—to LONG BEACH THEATER in Manhattan, the OFFICERS FOR THE URBAN ARTS in Burlington and Middlebury's DOWN HILL THEATRE.

"There's a real solidarity," says Sommers. "Both Vermont and West Oakland share this idea of self-reliance and a kind of contrast of authority. We try, in both places, to trust people according to their merit, I believe, as opposed to the biased nature of their clothing or car, or their resume."

Plus, he adds, the last way to win people over in both places is to walk up and say hi.

That's a lesson Sommers learned immediately upon landing in his new neighborhood, where residents in the first scene of *Hick in the 'Hood*. The show opens with a literal crash. Sommers and a friend were in his home one night when they heard a loud noise at the front door. Afraid someone was breaking



Michael Sommers

in, Sommers investigated, sure enough, a man was at the front door trying to enter. What did Sommers do? He went to the door and said hi.

The man turned out to be his next-door neighbor, David. In a hilarious interaction recorded onstage, David gradually admits he was, in fact, trying to break in—but only because he'd thought kids were making the house coming trouble.

"And I gave him the benefit of the doubt. I believed him," Sommers says. The friendship didn't happen right away, he's quick to add. "He went home kind of dejected, so I

actually went over and thanked him—but I literally met my best friend in the neighborhood when he was trying to break into my house."

For *Hick in the 'Hood*, Sommers tapped his decades of theatrical experience to switch seamlessly among more than 30 characters. A graduate of the University of Vermont's theater program, he co-founded Burlington's BEER CANOE THEATRE COMPANY (he called

the Garage Theatre) in 1989. In 1994, Sommers followed a girl to the Bay Area, where he joined the Screen Actors Guild and landed small parts in films including

Fetch Adams, while laughing up a steady stream of commercial gigs.

Sommers landed in West Oakland in 2006, right before a divorce and after a long search for a house in the Bay Area that he could afford on an actor's income. He wound up buying a shabbyfixer-upper that had been foreclosed on, he says. Despite the house's shabby appearance, Sommers says, he considered it a steal, since all its valuable parts—the plumbing, the pipes, the kitchen appliances—had yet to be stolen.

In the eight years he's lived in the neighborhood, as audiences will learn, Sommers has experienced plenty of ups and downs. His house was truly broken into several times in the first year; troubling things happened to his friends and neighbors; and, in recent years, West Oakland gentrified, rapidly and controversially. The show is deeply personal for Sommers. "Friends of mine who were [in past audiences] didn't know some things about my life," he admits. "My marriage, disappointment. My best friend, my dad and my grandparents are characters in the show."

Hick in the 'Hood can't help but touch on some charged social issues—they're embedded in the material—but the show is ultimately a feel-good, character-driven comedy. The scenes are short, the dialogue is snappy, and Sommers frequently addresses the audience directly (there are also frequent humorous interludes).

The actor says he isn't interested in drawing conclusions. He just wants to take audience members along for the ride and invite them to look at West Oakland through his eyes, from a "Vermont boy's" perspective, before they judge a place or a group of people.

Sommers says he's looking forward to telling his tale for a hometown audience. "You always hear [Vermonters] ask, 'Where do our kids go, and what do they do when they leave [the state]?' he says. "Well, here's a surprise! We do all sorts of things." ☺

INFO

Hick in the 'Hood: A Vermont Boy in West Oakland by Michael Sommers. Friday and Saturday March 21 and 22, 7:30 p.m., in Long Beach Theatre in Manhattan; Wednesday March 26, 7:30 p.m., at Off Center for Growth in Arlington, Virginia; and Sunday March 30, 2 p.m., in Towne Hall Theatre in Middlebury. Ticket prices vary by location.

In Vermont Performances, New England Singers Call Up Ancient Sardinian Singing

BY ETHAN DE SEIFE

The isolated Mediterranean island of Sardinia happens to lie about the same geographic area as the state of Vermont, and for similar reasons: rugged and mountainous. And that's pretty much where the similarities end, but by tapping into Sardinia's ancient polyphonic song tradition known as *canti a tenore*, an American singing group with roots in Vermont represents a bridge between two cultures that have seldom been connected.

That group, **VOICES OF ATLANTIC**, will showcase the extraordinary vocal skills it refined on a recent trip to Sardinia in its upcoming performance in Burlington and Montpelier.

Canti a tenore is an a cappella vocal style in which each of a group's four members sings in a specific tonal range. When singing, they often stand in a small, close-knit square, face to face, with arms around each other's shoulders. Much of the music's power derives from the tension between the intimacy of the setting and the power of the vocalizations.

The singers' physical arrangement onstage is not the most unusual element of this music. *Canti a tenore* is a "drone singing" tradition. Its singers use not only their vocal cords but their "false vocal folds"—muscles in the throat whose principal purpose is to keep food from entering the windpipe. Normally these play little or no role in speech or singing. With practice, though, singers can learn to use their false vocal folds to produce a low, droning tone that resonates at a pitch one octave below that being produced simultaneously by the vocal cords.

This style of singing is perhaps best known to American audiences from the 1994 documentary *Gargula Blues*, about an American blues musician who learns the throat-singing tradition of Tuva, a region of Siberia. (The singers of some particularly angry-sounding metal bands also employ it.)

The Sardinian throat-singing tradition is largely unknown in this country, though in 2008 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated it as a tradition of "intangible cultural heritage." Such honors are well and good, but it's the music that matters most. The harmonic interplay between the four singers' tones makes *canti a tenore* especially pleasing to the ears.

So, why have these American singers from the Northeast taken it upon themselves to learn not only this obscure singing style, but the Sardinian language of its traditional songs? **ADAM BLOK**, the group's leader, says the reason has everything to do with the complex interplay of the music's intense harmonies.

"It's a truly polyphonic music in which no one part can stand on its own, all the parts depend on each other," he says. "It requires an intense level of engagement with the other singers."

tenore songs in 2007, mostly at Paisley's home in Massachusetts. Of practical necessity was a "how to sing *canti a tenore*" YouTube video that Paisley had tracked down. "That video played after this really chaotic ocean of sound," Blok says, "and gave us the starting point for being able to map out the structure of what was going on in the music."

As their love of the music grew—and as their Sardinian improved—the singers raised the funds to travel to the country in May 2010. Over just three weeks,

its members into minor celebration on the island, where, Blok says, locals have responded to them with a sort of earnest respect and appreciation.

The group's two upcoming Vermont concerts are part of its first tour since visiting Sardinia. Blok says the singers are performing with renewed enthusiasm, calling *Tenores de Atlantic* a "transformed group."

"One thing I'm really excited about," says Blok, "is that now all the songs have people and stories behind them. We all



VOICES OF ATLANTIC

Blok, 32, is a musician and music educator who teaches singing in numerous workshops and schools; he belongs to the **SHAW MOUNTAIN SINGERS**, an international folk group based partly in Vermont. *Tenores de Atlantic* ("Singers From Elsewhere" in Sardinian) goes Blok and his companions (Doug Paisley, who sings the *sole part*, Call Loris, contra, and Gideon Crevelling, *mezzo obo*) the opportunity to delve deep into one of the world's great vocal traditions.

The members of the group, who know one another from previous musical projects, started performing *canti a*

Blok relies. "We learned more than in the five years before that."

In Sardinia, the group's training was anything but formal. Rather, they visited small villages—each of which had its own local version of *canti a tenore*—and, after plenty of choruses, meals and "really good Sardinian wine," they "vamped" songs with local groups, Blok says. They returned with a largely expanded repertoire.

Unexpectedly, a YouTube video of a *Tenores de Atlantic* performance has gone viral in Sardinia. That video, along with the group's tour, has made

ready had a thirst for learning as much as we could, but now we're also thinking about the guy we were singing with at seven at night who had to wake up at four in the morning to herd his sheep.

We have such vivid memories of and fond relationships with the singers that we met." ☺

INFO

Tenores de Atlantic Saturday, March 22, 7:30 p.m., at the Union Church of Montpelier; and Sunday, March 23, 7:30 p.m., at the New City Church in Burlington. Both shows, \$10 to \$15. www.voicesofatlantic.com

BRIEF HISTORIES OF EVERYDAY OBJECTS

By Andy Warner

#7: Bathtubs

That first American bathtub, Mencken explained, weighed 1,750 pounds and was 7 feet long. Doctors denounced it as hazardous to one's health.



Mencken came clean in 1926, writing that "if there were any facts in it they got there accidentally."



On December 28th, 1917, readers of the New York Evening Mail were shocked to discover that they'd missed an important event!



President Millard Fillmore, Mencken wrote, put the debate to rest, and installed the first bathtub in the White House in 1851. The nation followed suit.



The story of the bathtub spread far and wide. There was one problem, though: Mencken had made the whole thing up as a prank.



But it was too late. The bathtub hoax had become accepted as common knowledge. The story still pops up frequently today, even appearing a few years ago in *The Wall Street Journal*. Always check your sources!

And H. L. Mencken? In 1926, he wrote



Digging it out would be a dreadful job, and the result, after all that labor, would probably be a string of banalities

Hey! I resent that!



-ad 74



ANDY WARNER

His comics have been published by Metro Syndicate, R200, Popstar, Square, gaggle.com, and American Rubber Media. A co-creator of White Center for Cartoon Studies and currently resides in California. To see more of Andy's work, visit andywarnercomics.com



DRAWN & PANELED IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN ANDY WARNER AND THE CENTER FOR CARTOON STUDIES IN WHITE RIVER JUNCTION, VERMONT. FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE CENTER FOR CARTOON STUDIES, IT IS NOW KNOWN AS THE CENTER FOR CARTOON STUDIES. VISIT CARTOONSTUDIES.ORG

Dear Cecil,

Autism has gone from being a mental disorder to an absolute fad. NASCAR has run races named after it. It has its own "spectrum" for differential diagnosis. Movie stars and athletes brag about their children's autism. People with some condition in the "spectrum" write books bragging on themselves. It even has its celebrity cranks and medical quackery. When did autism get promoted from an unhappy malfunction of the brain to something special? Or is it, like the pink stuff for breast cancer, simply a result of aggressive and successful marketing? Does any of that marketing do anything for the people with autism and their families? Or, for that matter, further research into the condition with an eye to curing or at least improving it?

Your retired reference librarian fan, Kathleen, aka Bookworm

Nothing like a good rant, eh, Kathleen? But be careful. If you start going on obsessively about something long after everybody else has lost interest, someone's going to disapprove you as antisocial.

More precisely, they may claim you have Asperger's syndrome, one of the autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) you refer to. These with the syndrome, named after Hans Asperger, the Austrian pediatrician who first ascertained it in 1944, focus obsessively and lack social skills or empathy. At the same time — and here we see why this condition has become fashionable — often they also have above average intelligence and become wildly successful due to their powers of

concentration and willingness to trample everybody else.

One guy famously said to have a touch of Asperger's is Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, whose flat affect and general geekiness were caricatured in *The Social Network*. Other tech moguls supposedly displaying the signs include Craigslist founder Craig Newmark, Brian Cohen of 3G Telecom, and Microsoft's Bill Gates.

You may say: We should all be such mental cases.

Just my point. If it's so-called mental disorder is defined so broadly that any number of self-made billionaires is believed to have it, the diagnosis is useless and needs to be rethought.

Same backlogged. Autism was once believed to be rare,



affecting no more than one in 2,000. There was no mistaking those who had it: They were severely withdrawn, incapable of normal conversation or interaction, and often exhibited oddball, sometimes violent behavior or fixations.

Starting in the mid-20th century, though, some psychiatrists began defining autism more broadly to include children with various psychological disorders but more or less normal language skills. This culminated in the inclusion of Asperger's disorder in the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV), published in 1994.

In a rushed 2011 comp. Allen Frances, the psychiatry professor who chaired the DSM-IV task force, said he and his colleagues knew that once Asperger's was declared an

official mental illness, diagnoses of autism disorders would rise sharply — in one to 1,200, maybe even one in 500.

Little did they know ASD assessment is subjective, based on things such as lack of eye contact, head flapping and poor language skills — there's no physical test or scan. Clinicians began seeing ASDs everywhere.

Today the Centers for Disease Control estimates about one in 88 people has an ASD. A South Korean study claims the rate in that country is one in 38, nearly 3 percent of the population.

Whoa, and almost double! The point of declaring something a disorder is to identify those who need help, not sort out future computer-science majors. They got the diagnostic criteria for Asperger's syndrome and other ASDs right-sized in DSM-5, published last year. It's thought that 16 to 40 percent of these previously assumed with an ASD will no longer qualify.

We know how that works out, but a lot of damage has already been done. To cite an obvious case in point: With ASDs seemingly epidemic, people looked for something to blame. In 1998 a team led by British physician Andrew Wakefield published an article in the medical journal *Lancet* purporting to link

ASDs to the MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine. TV personality Jenny McCarthy made headlines for years claiming not only that her son's autism was caused by vaccinations but that she'd successfully treated it with steroids and diet. Wakefield's article was ultimately discredited and retracted, but not before the MMR vaccination rate in the UK had dropped to 80 percent.

Autism advocates and parents of kids with Asperger's/Gold cases of the disorder may say: OK, maybe ASDs have been overdiagnosed. So what? There's strength in numbers, and the publicity has certainly raised autism awareness. The answer to that is: Yes, but at the cost of obscuring the actual condition.

On the one hand you've got people thinking Asperger's syndrome is the result of a future tech genius and thus nothing to worry about, on the other hand, if there actually were an environmental cause of autism, with so many false positives being reported, we'd never know. The biggest fear activists would do for the objects of their benevolence is to make people understand: Here are the signs you've got an autism spectrum disorder and, equally important, here are the signs you don't.

INFO

Is there something you need to get straight? Cecil Adams can deliver the Straight Dope on any topic. Write Cecil Adams at the Chicago Reader, 111 E. Wacker Drive, 15-1607, or cecil@thestraightdope.com.

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Elena Versus Victor

"How long do you think this ride will take?"

It was snowing, lightly but steadily, as it had been for more than an hour. Elena Gammon, our columnist, was speaking to me from the shotgun seat of my taxi. We were headed for Seven Mountain Lodge, the grand new resort toward the top of Mountaineer Road. Her extended family had arrived the previous day, and I had mispredicted, I believe, her parents and younger brother. Elena had arrived at the airport terminal via the Greyhound bus out of Boston.

"Well, here's the thing," I replied.

"Naturally, about snow or ice conditions, the ride is about an hour. But I'm afraid we got to double the estimate today. The highway will probably be a mess, and I doubt we'll be getting more than 30-40 miles an hour."

"No worries," she said. "I am on vacation. This is my last semester at BU."

This girl was a post-ice beauty, with long, black hair and round, dark eyes. Having met her mother, I could see where Elena got her good looks.

"Boston University, huh?" In the early '70s my older brother owned a used-furniture store on the corner of Haver and Comm Ave. It was called Zuka's, named after the monkey that lived in a cage in the basement. He was always buying and selling stuff to the BU students. I met my brother, not Zuka the monkey. Anyway, it

was quite the hippie hangout back in the day before they got famous, the guys from Aerosmith used to spend time in his store."

"What's Aerosmith?" Elena asked, wide-eyed.

"Are you kidding me? You actually don't?"

"Got you," she said, laughing. "Hey, that was easy!"

"Well, I see easy," I said, laughing along. With rush hour closing in, Tift Carmo was tangled in traffic. Combine that with the few inches of still-falling fresh snow, and I wasn't surprised to find that my

highway prediction was spot-on. Stringing onto the interstate, I saw most everyone was sticking to the right lane and driving at half the normal speed. I'd be right on time.

I said, "I see you both your folks are Russian emigrants, but were you born here or in Russia?"

"My brother and I were both born in America. I'm a Jersey girl,

God help me."

"Hey, Jersey rocks. Do you have any postgraduation plans, or are you just going to chill for a while?"

I'm usually hesitant to pose that question to college seniors. The pressure on them can be intense, and if they don't have anything lined up, asking about the future only adds to the anxiety they might be feeling. But Elena struck me as really together, my intuition told me that she would likely have solid plans.

"I have a job I'm starting at JP Morgan in New York this summer. It's somewhat entry level, but I don't mind complaining. It's a foot in the door. I actually told the person who interviewed me that the position wasn't his, my ultimate goal, but I would be happy to start small. I repeated due to my father, and he thought that was a terrible answer to give, and was sure I wouldn't get the offer. Boy, was he happy to be proven wrong! Oh, my God—I'm such a daddy's girl, and that will probably never change."

"Hey, being close to your parents is a great thing. I'm sure it has its drawbacks too, but having parents who care and are not afraid to show it is a real boost to life."

"Yeah, I'm blessed to be close with my whole family, actually. It's a typical Russian tribe—I have endless aunts and uncles and cousins."

"So what's, like, your relationship status, if I may ask?" Are you courting with a college romance? That can get dicey with graduation looming?"

"I actually have a serious boyfriend who lives in New York. I met him at a bar—how cliché is that? It was when I was there interning at JP Morgan this past summer."

"What does he do?" I asked. "Is he a finance person or what?"

"No, he graduated medical school and took a residency in a hospital in Quebec. It's actually great that he's not in business, because, like, ultra-competitive, and that would be a big strain in the relationship if we were in the same field."

Finally, we made it off the highway and turned north on Route 300 toward Stowe. The going continued to be slow, but the company was interesting. Elena was a

chipper person and optimistic about the future. That's reassuring to experience in a young person and not, sadly, less common than it used to be.

Getting out of a fall in the conversation, Elena grinned and said, "I think my cousin Victor came up this weekend, too. That's always a challenge for me, dealing with him."

"Really?" I said. "What is it about Victor that pushes your buttons?"

"Oh, that's exactly it. Dude pushes my buttons big time. We're having a normal conversation, and he just starts spewing this fake information. I mean, things that I simply know for a fact to be inaccurate. So I'm all, like, 'Victor, you're wrong about that,' and he tells me I'm wrong, and then we're, like, off and running. He's a liar, then me, and we're being going at it like this once I was about 15."

"I sound like he gets off on getting you going," I said. "You know what? Don't give him the pleasure. Being right is not all it's cracked up to be, anyway. Sometimes it can be just a huge waste of time and energy."

"I know, I know. I actually tell myself that, but then I see him and he looks so every time! I just can't bear to see him go unchallenged!"

"Well, you talkative, super-competitive? Elena laughed. "Yes, sir—that's me!"

"Maybe think the obligatory weekend?"

"Maybe Victor and I can race?"

"Perfect," I said, chuckling. "You and Victor can settle the thing once and for all!" (E)

INFO

Check us out for more columns that can take the reader on an off-the-beat adventure. "Hackie" is Jeremiah Portage; email: hackie@vermontmagazine.com.

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Two Against A TOWN

Will a lesbian couple's Addison lawsuit prove harassment or sour grapes?

BY KATHRYN FLAGG

When a lesbian couple in rural Addison County filed a lawsuit earlier this month accusing the town's selectboard chair, his wife and two neighbors of discriminating against them because of their sexual orientation, the media pounced. And no wonder: Legal proceedings initiated by Barbara Ernst and Barbara Sapego allege all manner of unfair treatment since the couple moved to their lakeside home in the town of Addison a decade ago.

"The neighbors showed offensive language and made rude gestures, accompanied by threats of physical harm, and acts of trespass and intimidation," the suit reads. They allege that their husbands left dead animals on the property, including "disappointed business."

Addison's town files overflow with similar complaints from the two women known commonly as "the Barbabas." But spend some time in this small town on the edge of Lake Champlain, and you'll hear another side of this story.

According to town officials and residents, what Ernst and Sapego call discrimination and bias is no more than the cumulative effect of long-standing conflicts in a small lakeside neighborhood on Fisher Point Road. They say the couple's disputes with the town's various officials and residents, what Ernst

believes "...they don't have a leg to stand on. It's hurtful to all of us."

Ernst and Sapego's lawyer, David Bond, filed the suit on March 5 in Addison Superior Court. It alleges that town officials, under the leadership of selectboard chair Jeff Kaufman, have repeatedly made discriminatory zoning decisions and resisted against the women for a discrimination complaint they filed four years ago with the Vermont Human Rights Commission. The Barbabas argue that the town unfairly increased the valuation of their property and routinely failed to inform them about zoning and development hearings that affected them.

The couple decided to be represented for this article, designating the *NY Times* as a spokesman. While town officials insist on an "strict enforcement" against minor or unproven infractions by law clients, Bond said, "The town allows angry neighbors to do whatever they want."

That includes late rating graffiti messages on municipal property. According to the suit, the town took two years to remove the words "I Hated Pigs" after someone spray-painted them on the ground outside the town office around March 1, 2002.

The lawsuit also unspecified financial damages and targets the Town of Addison, Kaufman and his wife, Carol and neighbors John and Linda Corrigan. The suit accuses the Kaufmans and Corrigan of defamation, invasion of privacy and interference with prospective business relations.

Specifically, the complaint cites Carol Kaufman for circulating an anonymous, defamatory letter to town officials and some residents, an allegation she denies. In addition, it takes aim at her husband, who is also founder-partner of the Hope Community Fellowship, which the legal complaint describes as an "ultra-conservative" Baptist church. It alleges that Kaufman and other town officials took homophobic views based on fundamentalist Christian beliefs. This time, the suit alleges, "has motivated a number of decisions by the Town that were calculated to force Mrs. Ernst and Mrs. Sapego to leave town."

"I don't mind telling you that it used to be a great place to go," said Richard Myers, who resides on Fisher Point Road in the summer with his wife, whose family owned vacationing there in 1979. They spend winters in Florida. Their camp is one of many lakeside properties in the neighborhood that share Ernst and Sapego's property line. "Now, we almost dread going back," Myers said. "There's always some kind of crisis."

But homophobia has nothing to do with it, according to Myers and other neighbors. Instead, they say, it's an accumulation of ill will between adjoining property owners of different classes and backgrounds, including over fences, rights of way and trespassing, as well as bitter fights about individual efforts to improve or expand properties.

Myers said he and his wife have owned their of the drama, but he was appalled at recent news reports. "I am an individual and everybody else down there has just been pegged to a den of bigotry" — a characterization he said is simply not true.

Sapego and Ernst "cause a lot of anger in our community" and David Cole, who sits on the planning commission and design review board and initiated the allegations about discriminatory decisions about town. "We make our decisions on a case-by-case basis, and on our zoning ordinance."

Like most town officials, he came outright bewildered by the charges. Selectboard members first learned about the lawsuit when a Champlain Post News cover showed up, curious in town, at their monthly meeting the day after "Town Meeting Day." The media had been tipped off by RUPIN, a Burlington-based consultancy owner for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer individuals that has been publicizing the plight of Ernst and Sapego. National news outlets, such as *Huffington Post* and *Advocate.com*, have since covered the suit, but without tipping to others in Addison or digging into a complicated and at times bizarre backstory.

Most of the individuals named in the couple's legal complaint — including Jeff and Carol Kaufman — declined to speak with *Seven Days* for this story because of the ongoing litigation. Other sources consented on condition of anonymity, because they said they feared the Barbabas would retaliate against them. But many townspeople did agree to speak on the record. And towns, police and court records contain many details about the complex dispute and news that preceded it.

Water Fight

Ernst and Sapego moved to Addison in 2004. They paid \$100,000 for their home at 330 Fisher Point Road, a private road that turns off Route 17 directly across from a large dairy farm. Their eight-and-a-half-acre property has 52 feet of lake frontage.

The property touches 21 others, including a dozen lakeside, "underused and grandfathered house lots," as the lawsuit describes them. Wooded, hand-limited signs identify the corners of the small homes and seasonal camps in the neighborhood — but there's no sign for Ernst or Sapego. At least three security cameras, mounted on corners of the couple's home, are aimed at the surrounding neighborhood.

Addison stretches from the base of Snake Mountain to the shores of Lake Champlain, and the wide, largely flat expanse is between support several dairy operations. But at the western edge, farms give way to lakeside settlements and recreational hubs, including the Champlain Bridge Marina and the DAR State Park. The properties along the lake edge from humble camps, many of which

I cannot stress enough how much courage and bravery it has taken for the Barbabas to stand up to the discrimination, harassment and intimidation that certain town officials have perpetrated against them.

DAVID BOND





SCAN THIS PAGE WITH THE LAYAR APP OR VISIT
SEVENDAYSVT.COM TO READ THE FULL TEXT OF
THE LAWSUIT AND THE ALLEGED DEFAMATORY
LETTER INCLUDED AS AN EXHIBIT.

SEE PAGE 9



have been in families for generations, to larger late-front
retirement or vacation homes that have been modest
and turned into year-round residences.

"Where the Barbours live, the houses are close to-
geth'er and there's people that have lived there for a long
time," said Rob Hunt, who sits on Addison's school board
and schoolboard. He describes a
sense of pride to culture clothes.
"There is a faction that believes
that because they've lived there the
longest, they don't have to follow
any rules," he said. And also "the
wealthy ones, that believe that
because they're wealthy, the rules
don't apply to them."

Gulgons said that making plan-
ning and zoning decisions in this
part of town — where properties are
small, lots are often nonconforming,
and old structures don't meet the
current best practices of building
and zoning — can be a headache.
Decisions often have to apply for
conditional use permits or variances
to proceed with home improve-ment
or construction projects.

"As I've told my committee very many times, there's
literally nothing that we can do that is going to be accept-
able to each and every individual within the town," said
Gulgons. "It's a very difficult game all the time, and we can
only make rules and regulations that we hope are in the
general interest and the public interest."

"I would not want to live there," said Hunt of the
latestest neighborhood. "Everybody gets into everybody
else's business."

There's a snag. It's played out over the years in subdi-
vided meetings, development review board proceedings
and in the courts, not to mention in the backyards of
neighbors on Fisher Pond Road.

Not long after moving to town, the Barbours started
barking heads with their neighbors.

In 2004, the lowest-sitings, neighbors Roger and Mary
Flores moved first trailers onto a half-acre lot adjacent to
Ernst and Supena's property. The women complained to
the town, which resulted in the removal of the trailers that
were encroaching on their land. But the town granted the
Flores a permit to leave the remaining trailers where
they were. Ernst and Supena appealed the decision, and
contended at the time that the town refused to rescind the
permit and denied them an opportunity to participate
in the hearing process. Today there are two trailers on the
property, occupied by Roger and Mary Flores.

Ernst and Supena again went to the town in 2007 after
officials granted adjoining landowners Robert and Lois
Woods a variance to rebuild an existing camp and add a
second floor. Their lawsuit contends that the permit was
issued in disregard of the town's existing zoning regula-
tions and, just like three years before, the couple was not

**I don't see
any gender bias.
They keep playing
that particular
card, because
they feel it's to
their particular
benefit ... It's
hurtful to all of us.**

FRANK SALGADO

properly warned about — and therefore not able to
participate in — the hearing process.

Then came year three when a GRAD plan for a single
home Greg and Joanne Robert to expand their camp
by adding a deck and a second story. Ernst and Supena
challenged the town's decision to waive environmental
impact, where records show a judge denied Ernst and
Supena's motion for a summary judgment on the case.
That means it could have moved on to a trial.

The Supenas settled the dispute by selling the prop-
erty to Supena, according to the Barbours' lawsuit.
Supena, along with her brother, purchased the property
for \$320,000 and, using the Supenas' previously issued
permits, began construction on a home for Supena's mother.

Supena and Ernst allege in their lawsuit that the
town attempted to revoke those permits, and that Jeff
Kaufmann — serving at the time as Addison's zoning ad-
ministrator — "tried to shut down the project for alleged
violation of the building code." Supena and her brother
were forced to hire an attorney, the suit continues, to
obtain their certificate of occupancy.

Today the second home — with large windows and
vaulted ceilings — is assessed at \$402,300, according
to town records, and is listed as the vacation rental site
Home Away for \$300 a night.

Ernst and Supena also went to environmental court
to fight home improvements on the property of John
and Linda Carmona, the neighbors they are suing for
defamation in their current lawsuit. The Carmonas live
in Chittenden County and use the Addison camp as a
seasonal home. The women applied a conditional use
permit and two certificates of occupancy the town issued

for the property and, last September, the court upheld
the town's decision. Ernst and Supena have appealed the
decision to the Vermont Supreme Court.

Myers said he and his wife stayed out of the fray for
years. But last year, they're in the middle of the Carmonas
— the new close neighbors — in the environmental court
process.

Myers has come to regret that decision. Ernst and
Supena have since put up a new split-level fence on their
property line that runs directly in front of the Myers
camp. "Through their lawyer, Ernst and Supena said they
left a 15-foot gap in the fence to allow Myers and his wife
access to their land, consistent with their easement rights,
but Myers said they're blocked off the spot the family has
used for decades to get into their camp."

"The only reason why I can think of as to why we had the
necessity to speak up for the Carmonas" said Myers, noting
the couple asked him to do so. The Myers have already
spent \$700 talking to a lawyer about how to get a section
of the fence removed.

Myers isn't named in the Barbours' lawsuit, but
through his lawyer, they claim he's a member of the
"snappy little group" with which they have contended for
years.

Myers recalled sitting down in his living room with
Ernst at one point several years ago. To his confusion
about why the neighbors he remembers telling her, "I
don't care what you are — it's not better me," Myers

TWO QUESTIONS TO GO BY PAGE 10



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADDISON TOWN HALL
ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFREY W. HUNTER
PHOTO COURTESY OF ADDISON TOWN HALL
PHOTO COURTESY OF ADDISON TOWN HALL

said. When she asked Myers and his wife where they "stood" in the dispute between neighbors, Myers said he didn't stand with anyone, all he wanted was to come down and enjoy the lake.

Good Fences Make Poor Neighbors

The split-fence line isn't the first barrier the Barbaras have erected in their Vermont neighborhood. In 2004, Ernst and Sapego put up a 5-foot-11-inch privacy fence between their property and a home owned by Jack and Louise Anderson, it was one such day of the no-foot-out-of that would have required a zoning permit. The new lawsuit explains that the fence went up "due to the repeated threats and acts of intimidation by one of their neighbors."



Barbara Sapego and Barbara Ernst

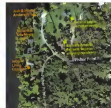
on both sides of this strange standoff, including some on the second letter Addison residents have sent town officials impugning the Barbaras. But nothing compares to the anonymous letter circulated in April 2011 that is an exhibit in the current lawsuit. Sapego and Ernst claim that the handwriting on the envelope suggests it came from Carol Kaufman, the schoolboard chair's wife. Plus, a contextual observation that Ernst and Sapego say they provided as a confidential disclosure with Jeff Kaufman.

Styled as "Addison Wikileaks," and titled "THE TRUTH about the Barbaras," the letter is a hodgepodge of accusations and public records. It includes documentation of Ernst's bankruptcy filing in Bedford, a failed worker's compensation suit Sapego filed in Massachusetts, and small-claims cases filed against both women in the

current dispute and, in his view, don't establish a pattern of poor relationships with neighbors.

In Addison, he said, his clients have been harassed and abused simply for speaking up when a shouting neighbor tried to expand their camps or waterline homes — moves that would have hurt their property values, and they agree, the health of Lake Champlain.

"What came first, the chicken or the egg?" he asked. "Was it that they opposed the neighbors' attempts to expand their property? Or did the neighbors harbor the animosity from the beginning? I don't know" and found "I can say for sure that a lot of what they were doing was really just exercising their rights under the zoning ordinances and getting payback — and that payback manifested itself in really ugly ways."



Neighbors flocked to the schoolboard and complained, according to the meeting's minutes, about "how the fence was installed so as to obstruct the Andersons' view of the lake." Kaufman told the neighbors that the matter was in the hands of the zoning administrator, Richard Pratt, who would have to determine whether a violation had occurred.

At subsequent meetings, neighbors again asked about the "fence issue." Sapego and Ernst say they weren't notified that their property was up for discussion at these meetings, and they weren't present at these deliberations. In their lawsuit they argue that the town incorrectly cited them for a zoning violation "without even attempting to measure the fence."

Still on the fence front, in January 2008, Ernst and Sapego sent a certified letter to the town objecting to zoning changes proposed by their neighbor, Roger Sleeper, who had suggested zoning rules governing fences, setbacks and structures on nonconforming lots in a series of the schoolboard and planning meetings. The couple's letter said that the changes would "irretrievably negatively impact property values for all property owners in Addison." They also wrote that the proposals were "related to an extensive and continuation of the hate crimes, harassment and discrimination of us... based on our sexual orientation."

Their letter continued "These threats have been continued for almost four years since we moved into our home in October 2004. These threats include attempted murders against us with vehicles, running us off our own property and our own road with vehicles, physical, personal and verbal threats of violence against us, hitting our babies and throwing the heads and bodies into our stained boat, hateful and threatening verbal threats specifically against us because of our sexual orientation, harassment of us with direct and indirect support from others."

There have been strong words and personal attacks

Washington and Addison civil divisions of Vermont courts. In their lawsuit, the two women say the "TRUTH" amounts to "false and scurrilous allegations." The letter points Ernst and Sapego as devious and dishonest, and claims they are "harassment in a catch who never confronted in their deviousness schemes."

"In short they are accomplished con artists who since coming to Addison, to what they claim is the land of 'Country Roads,' are now out to fleece the willing limbs of this peaceful and safe and public community..." On individual meetings they appear as precious and nice, but because they are gathering data and will... are [sic] against you later?"

In fact, Addison isn't the first town where things have heated considerably for Ernst and Sapego. In 2004, neighbors of the women in Bow, Massachusetts, called police three times for assistance because, they alleged, one of the Barbaras was either trespassing or causing a disturbance on their property.

Police reports show that in one case, the neighbor said Sapego struck him, breaking his glasses, and she said the attack happened the other way around, when the man allegedly threw her to the ground.

According to the police report, Sapego later called the police station repeatedly, including on the 911 emergency line, demanding to speak with the officers who responded to the call and with the chief of police. Eventually State's police chief told his officers to warn Sapego that she'd be charged with making harassing phone calls if she didn't stop.

Bond said the Bow incident isn't relevant to the

Two Sides

Ross Fountain of BU2P — the Burlington nonprofit that has taken the side of Ernst and Sapego — describes them as "two wonderful human beings." Ernst, a nurse in the neonatal intensive care unit at Fletcher Allen Health Care, is "just really caring — very calm," Fountain said. "She's not neurotic."

Sapego, Fountain estimated, is the brother of the past, but is also level-headed and a great collector of information. Fountain mentioned that the couple is devoted to environmental causes.

That devotion to the environment is one of the reasons the women, speaking through their lawyer, cited the move to Vermont. They were active in the fight to

stop a five-burn at International Paper in Thetford, N.Y., and they co-founded the Northeast Clean Air Coalition and Northeast Association of Natural Lake Restoration.

Sapego and Ernst were also involved in environmental battles before moving to Vermont. As previous residents on Lake Champlain — in New York — they fought the use of herbicides to treat invasive weeds in the lake, say neighbors and a 2005 news report. The Lake Champlain Association website says that even though applications of the herbicide were well within federally permitted limits, the towns of New's selectmen decided to halt the treatments "due to a single threat of legal action by two individuals [who will go unnamed upon legal advice]."

Fountain knew both women through BU2P before they brought their current lawsuit. She calls their allegations "shocking," particularly in light of the "wonderful



Styled as "Addison Wikileaks," and titled "THE TRUTH about the Barbaras," the letter is a hodgepodge of accusations and public records.

regulation that Vermont has for LGBTQ folks." While she worked in Brooklyn doing outreach work at the gay community. Proulx said, she and other activists would "look to Vermont as a sort of oasis."

The Ernst and Supeno complaint should remind Vermonters that "it's not like one region of the country has a leg up on the other in terms of who goes to call themselves more progressive or a safer place to be," said Knauffman. "Like any other place in the country, on the individual level, we still get experiences of violence."

What's more, Proulx said, being a "whatsoever" about violence or discrimination, particularly in small communities, is a cross to bear. "Every place they go, people are going to know who they are," said Proulx. "That's what it is to live in a rural place. You can't escape it."

never heard him even refer to God at a selectboard meeting, or anything religious."

In fact, several officials in town said that they knew and worked with Jeff Knauffman for years before learning he served as a minister. There are some clergies, said Hunt, but they're not necessarily obvious. "He never wears, and he's a fantastic public speaker," he said. "Preachers are."

Bellevue's Jay Proulx called Jeff Knauffman an "isot" in the town of Addison, and described him as the kind of person who would give someone else the short of his back. "He's been a pleasure to work with on the board," she said.

Even Hunt, who tangled with Jeff and Carol Knauffman a few years ago when the Knauffmans reportedly discussed school issues at selectboard meetings, said his real of the

such as the Western Baptist Church, whose followers are known to wield protest signs bearing messages such as "God Hates Gays."

The Knauffmans live at the base of Snake Mountain, so for some from the Barbours in you can be and still reside in Addison. Not mindy greened golden retriever puppies cornered around the yard to get a toy.

"My god is that after this is over," said Carol Knauffman, on her voice broke and she took a deep breath. "That we're going to have healing him."

Knauffman hopes that the results of a 2010 Human Rights Commission investigation will come to light as a result of the new lawsuit. Supeno and Ernst filed a complaint alleging discrimination in 2008 but withdrew it several months



Geoffrey in a mountain community



Supeno and Ernst's mountain home



The town's small, white cabin

Gallegos has glossed a different lesson from small-town life. "You can't turn to the town every time you're unhappy with your problem with you and your shooting neighbor," said the Addison planning chair. Town and court records suggest Fisher Street Road neighbors on both sides of the issue have done just that.

But using the town is taking it to a whole new level, and Ernst and Supeno are among names. The lawsuit accuses Jeff Knauffman of "unintentionally expressing his hatred for gays and lesbians" in private conversations. Until recently, the suit alleges, the website for Knauffman's church, Hope Community Fellowship, had links to several faith-based anti-gay websites that label gay individuals as "dogs" and "homosexuals."

Hunt concludes that homophobia can exist anywhere, and it's possible that Supeno and Ernst have experienced instances of aggression or harassment in Addison. But he said he's seen no evidence of it from Jeff Knauffman or other town officials.

Take that "I Heart Fags" graffiti, for example. As Hunt remembers it, people first noticed the white, spray-painted sign on a Monday, after the weekend. In deciding how to deal with it, the road commissioner reported that he didn't have a way of knowing over the point, so he called on "T between two letters, forming 'fags' into 'fags'."

"He said, 'I Heart Fags' for a matter of days, not any longer," said Hunt. "I wasn't like the town ignored it. Ernst and Supeno have alleged to other media that the town removed it only after learning of the lawsuit. Hunt says it was not and is no longer visible."

"We have our share of rednecks" and Hunt, a dairy farmer. "You're a hell-damn pickup truck with a stick, but the people that do civil service, they don't tend to be these people."

"I think that most of us here have the 'live and let live' attitude," said Hunt. "I know the Barbours are going to be mad at me because I can't say that Jeff is a homophobic. I've

chances, and the recent allegations just don't match up."

"At this point, I can't say that I can think of anything that Jeff has done that was [illegal, unusual or offensive]," said Hunt.

Read and he has plenty of evidence that refutes that — although not "on the record statements" that the town is "doing this because they are gay," he said of his clients. "In discrimination cases, you're always left to rely on circumstantial evidence coupled with evidence of intent — and we have plenty of that in this case."

A Drawn-Out Battle

The sheriff served the Town of Addison on March 31 — six days after officials learned from a Channel 5 news crew that it was being sued. Town Clerk Maria Webb couldn't comment on the case last Friday morning, but it was clear that the lawsuit had residents talking. Within just a few moments of one another, two popped into Webb's office asking if the town had been served.

"What made for interesting reading" one said to the town clerk.

Not for Jeff Knauffman's wife, Carol Knauffman, who spoke briefly with a Seven Days reporter several times over four days. She and the couple about her in the suit — that she wrote and disseminated a "defamatory" anonymous letter about the couple, that she mailed a letter to Middlebury attorney William Jewett libelous purporting to be from Ernst and Supeno, and that she vilified and tried to ruin Ernst of the road — just isn't true.

In a brief conversation at the couple's home last week, Carol Knauffman also objected to the characterization of her and her husband as anti-gay bigots. Yes, they believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible, she said, but want to do as their book calls believers to practice love, and that she wanted to "ignore to disagree" on matters of sexual practices such as homosexuality like expressed contempt for groups

later after an investigation interviewed many in town. In their current lawsuit, Supeno and Ernst call it a "baseless inquiry" conducted by someone who shared "the antigay logic of many in the Town."

In an email about the investigation sent to Jeff Knauffman on March 6, 2010, the town's attorney William Ellis, and Vermont HRC state specialist Paul Brubaker "indicated some regret in not issuing a report, and acknowledged that there was a certain measure of unfairness in the Town having to have gone through the process without some findings."

Ellis continued. "After completing an interview, Mr. Brubaker concluded that there was no basis for the Barbours to prevail on their claim that the Town discriminated against them on the basis of sexual orientation. At worst, the Town demonstrated 'balancing' to use his word, is not providing the required notice of some hearings and in Richard Post raising a matter of violation without ever looking at or measuring the facts... There was no evidence of malice against the Barbours, and even if there was based upon the reputation testimony he checked, it was likely because of the religious nature or the fact that they are 'fundamental' not because of their sexual orientation."

Three years later, will another inquiry find evidence of discrimination?

No way, say town officials and the couple's neighbors. Gallegos reminded, "I just can't imagine that you're enough have a absolutely and utterly ridiculous this whole thing."

"Well, of course they'll say that," responded Bond. But when you look at the evidence, he contended, "the only reasonable inference is that there is a bias against" Ernst and Supeno.

Ultimately, the courts will decide, but Bond estimates it might take as long as two years before the case goes to trial. ☐

INFO

Contact: jeffrey@thetownofaddison.com

Making Connections

A new Queen City resident weighs her internet options

BY ALICIA FRIESE

Apartment hunting is hell in Burlington, I've heard. But for me it was worryfully easy. A few weeks into my search, a co-worker tipped me off about an affordable condo with an expansive view of the lake. Choosing an internet service provider turned out to be the next big part.

Before I go on, let me get this off my chest: I didn't choose Burlington Telecom (BT). I stuck with out-of-state-based FairPoint Communications for the same reason I don't buy fair-trade chocolate: It's BT, and I feel entitled to be cheap.

I could have stomached BT's \$66 installation fee, but the idea of paying \$5 every month for a modem asked me. Keep it for five years, and that's \$300—for a plastic box.

I do feel guilty for turning the cold shoulder to the little local company BT, an upstart offering to compete for customers with the telecom titan, one also confused with the effectiveness of its troubled past. It was revenue starved and on the brink of financial collapse when the state took administration emergency control and only \$2 million of taxpayer money to keep it afloat. Citibank subsequently sued the city for failing to repay \$34.5 million in loans used to build the network.

The recent settlement between the City of Burlington and Citibank removes the threat that the lender will against the entire fiber-optic network, but BT's future remains uncertain. Mayor Mire Weinberger has said the city intends to sell the company, but who knows who will buy it? And a reminder to be seen whether a local company can survive in a competitive price industry where Comcast is king.

I began my search by polling friends and acquaintances about their provider preferences. Other than a few people who recommended BT "because it's local" no one seemed to have strong feelings.

Googling "best internet provider in Burlington" wasn't much help. The top search result was a University of Vermont student guide that listed several other companies, including Comcast Communications and Green Mountain Access—but it was seven years old. (How could I trust a site that directed students to a Wikipedia article on dial-up access?)

After the fact, I made a phone call to Vermont's public service department and learned that there is no broadband provision in the state, six of which service my area in Burlington. In addition to BT, FairPoint and Comcast, I apparently could



have chosen from Verizon, AT&T, Sprint and Verizon Wireless Broadband, a service developed by the state, the University of Vermont and several other sources, given consumers a list of providers based on the criteria used by their firm. But a month ago, I was writing word of mouth to do me, and I assumed there were only three.

I knew Comcast hadn't been by the works, and I started there I've heard stories about Comcast peeping neighborhoods with their gear going door to door to lure customers away from BT. But for a company that so aggressively peddles its wires, it offered an infuriatingly opaque website.

I wanted fast Internet — no cable, no phone — at the cheapest price possible, but comparing rates online proved impossible. That's because neither Comcast nor FairPoint publishes prices on its website. And both have coverage maps too simplistic to be of much use. Here they are, per Mbps to the internet — a criterion praised on the open exchange of information — and they both have Comcast-free websites.

Instead, for information about rates, Comcast directed me to its cable chat room, where as "analyst" named Nongthamborn immediately tried to sign me up for an \$80-per-month package. It had a velocity rule to play, but

Nongthamborn himself was exceedingly pleasant. He was reasonable, too, when I pointed out how deceptive Comcast's pricing structure was — the daily affordable deal got twice as expensive one year on. Our exchange went like this:

Me: Thanks for your help. I'm not interested at this time because currently I pay \$28.99 for seven megabytes per second with FairPoint, which seems to me like a better deal.

Nongthamborn: I understood you, however, I am offering you the performance packages at \$20.99 a month for the first 12 months with 15 megabytes.

Me: I know, and I appreciate that, but then it jumps to \$66.99.

Nongthamborn: Yes, I see that.

I haven't chatted online with a stronger since middle school, and, as mundane as our conversation was, it evoked the same politeness I felt then. But when it became clear I wasn't interested in what Nongthamborn was selling, he exited the chat room promptly, leaving me staring at the sentence I'd started typing ("Where do you live?") and feeling pathetic.

To my credit, BT does publish its rates online. It even lists all the additional charges you might have to pay, although I still had to call to ask where the "steerbird" fee is. (It's a \$15-a-month charge that people who leave Burlington during the winter pay, instead of terminating their service and then paying another installation fee when they sign up again.)

BT's cheapest deal is \$19 per month, which lets you download and upload at a speed of five Mbps. Because the company uses a fiber-optic network, that speed is guaranteed. Other high-speed services are more fickle. FairPoint uses DSL, and the speed depends on how far you are from the provider's central office. Comcast uses its cable connection, which can get bogged down when too many people are signed on.

At my old apartment in Montpelier, FairPoint charged me \$36.99 a month for a download speed of "up to seven" megabytes per second. The upload speed was a paltry 768 kilobytes per second, but I never had a problem with it. When I called, a FairPoint rep and the company would transfer my service without any additional charges — no installation fee, no monthly modem fee.

I seemed liked the simplest route at the time.

~ OPENING IN MAY ~

TECHNOLOGY

The sunsets over Lake Champlain are stunning from my new apartment. I watched my first one while on the phone with a FairPoint customer-service rep, turning my modem on and off, glancing back and forth between the blinking green light — a bad sign — and the recording van.

No luck. But the next day I got the call I had been waiting for. Ben, a FairPoint technician, was on his way to help. Except he had instructions to help "Marla on College Street." I fussed up to not being Marla and tried to sweet-talk him into coming to my condo instead. Ben declined — policy prohibited it — but he was perplexed by the mix-up and said he'd get to the bottom of it.

**WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR I
WASN'T INTERESTED IN WHAT
NORTHUMBRIA WAS SELLING,
HE EXITED THE CHAT
ROOM PROMPTLY.**

True to his word, Ben called back a few hours later. Marla, it turned out, was vacationing in California and probably couldn't care less whether her internet was working. Ben had scoured my ticket from the office basement (don't ask, I didn't), but he would still have to go through the central office to get permission to help me.

A day later, Ben showed up and fixed the phone line — for now. I'm busy in the particulars, but the line's days are apparently numbered. I had to wade through FairPoint's Terms of Service agreement to determine that I'm on the hook if it stops working.

Had I opted for BT, cutting-edge, hard-to-cable made of pure glass would have delivered internet to my door. As nice as that was, I wouldn't have had to wait for someone in North Carolina to authorize his visit.

Ringless service are away from BT, though, and now I'm locked into another contract with FairPoint, extruding my internet connection to a fixed telephone line. When the contract expires next March, I'll be one year older — perhaps a little less miserly and ready, at last, to go local. ☺



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Vermont Gothic

Book reviews: *The Winter People*, Jennifer McMahon; *The Lord Came at Twilight*, Daniel Mills

BY MARGOT HARRISON

What's spooky about Vermont? Not much, if you focus on the state's wholesome, farm-fresh public image. But when you explore its darker, more desolate byways, a different picture emerges. A visit to the "wild, dazed hills of Vermont" gave horror legend H.P. Lovecraft his setting for "The Whisperer in Darkness" in the instantly creepy tale, published in 1931. Lovecraft describes the state as "a region where odd strange things have had a chance to grow and fester because they have never been stirred up."

In more recent years, the Connecticut-born author of local lore has inspired aerie short films and scores of purportedly haunted landmarks. This spring sees the release of two books from local authors that celebrate adroitly to the "Vermont gothic" tradition.

Montpelier's Jennifer McMahon has published a slew of suspense novels with a gothic bent, but her latest, *The Winter People*, is a full-on ghost story. Hardscrabble writer Daniel Mills, a joint University of Vermont grad, has made a name for himself among enthusiasts of Lovecraftian horror with his short fiction and 2011 novel *Reverence: A Dream of New England*. Now California Dark Renaissance Books has published a collection of his stories called *The Lord Came at Twilight*. The book is currently available in limited hardcover and deluxe editions; a trade paperback is forthcoming.

Both Mills and McMahon set Vermont as a primary setting — to very different effect. We stayed up late by the fire to discover the chosen from the 19th-century tales.

Ghosted, "weird" may be the wrong word to describe McMahon's fiction. Her novels tend to over-rely on familiar tropes: abandoned children, fairy tales turned dark, psychics on the loose, monster wife/women. *The Winter People* takes place in a rugged, rural area that has seen several generations of despoilers over a half century. "The West Hill Triangle, people called it. There was talk of natural talismans, a twisted killing, a door to another dimension, and, of course, slaves." The obvious inspiration is the "Beast upon a Tree" centered on Glensbury Mountain — a term coined by Carr, who chronicled the region's history of ranchings.

But who cares if the idea is new? McMahon uses an unusually sophisticated

mise- and perspective-hopping narrative to do what she's best at, pick up the pieces. As the story progresses in two different timelines, building toward shattering (if not always surprising) revelations, readers may find the book hard to put down.

Both alternating narratives concern residents of the same West Hill hill farm. In 1908, Kara Harrison Shea and her husband struggle to feed themselves on the barren plot. Schooled by her Native American cousin, Kara believes the land is warded by "dispend" or "winter people" who have been "called back from the land of the dead by grieving husbands and wives." After the experience, her own family tragedy she began to consider a seemingly unbelievable apocryph.

In the present day, 18-year-old Ruthe shares the farm with her sister and home-studio teacher, who has convinced her not to venture into the woods. But when Ruthe's mom disappears one frigid January night, she has no choice but to investigate the mysteries of the West Hill Triangle. The search leads her to dark "secret doors" published after an author's violent death. Soon Ruthe is on a collision course with Boston artist Katherine, who wants to know why her husband visited such former home on the last day of his life.

From the novel's first pages, horror fans will recognize its central content from Stephen King's *Pet Sematary*, W.W. Jacobs' "The Monkey's Paw" and countless other contemporary tales of haunted people who refuse to let their loved ones stay dead. The reader knows that resurrection magic never works in fiction without consequence — after horrific — consequences. But McMahon's gothic-driven characters, apparently unfamiliar with the saying "he cowered when you wish for," are eager to give it a try.

The characters' close-knit horror-film narrative widens the distance between them and the reader, by the time the ending rolls around, after plot twists galore, it may be hard to care about their fate. McMahon tends to draw her characters in broad strokes — villainous, passive, spooky, fixated — and psychological in depth. One character experiences a revelation that "this life is a punch in the gut hard and heavy."

As a meditation on the consequences of grief, then, *The Winter People* falls short. But as a creepy tale, it triumphs. Horror doesn't need freshness to horrify, as last summer's hit film *The Conjuring* proved. Indeed, fear is such a conservative emotion

BOOKS



IT'S HEARTENING TO SEE LOCAL WRITERS VENTURE BACK INTO THE NOT-SO-PASTORAL LANDSCAPES LOVECRAFT EVOKED.



FROM "HOUSE OF THE CARYATIDS" IN THE LORO CAME AT TWILIGHT

This evening was particularly hot, as I remember, during the degraded with the margins and all of a charmingly seductive. The three of us had left the camp down a long path that later arrived every from the others so as to preserve the very country, leaving out history as it is in a common company.

At noon we came to a small square road and we followed up until we reached the old plantation. From there we spent a large part of the day in a quiet native trip with children. It lasted to

have been abandoned during the previous summer and as a result for the crops lay unharvested the persons brown and sooty.

We descended the far side of the ridge line, passing ourselves when the sunset was about and gave way underfoot. The sun had almost set, but before that, and the world had seemed to move from before the rest of our experience came to seem interesting by the way the sunset moved by the light. We came to a crossroad marked by a

big stone at night. The "Pillars" it stood to mark the side implied in such a way as to point down a narrow road.

The morning was really the best with the best that we took in gladly, knowing already of that big house and what we might find there. And though the distance may have been a mile or two, the only light the night proved turbulent in the distance, dipping and swinging at the same, fading round about in the distance, so that it was the last part of the night before we emerged at the edge of the plantation itself.

that as original concept, by evaluating our country, can free us from its stifling clutches.

Lilo director James Wan, McMillan rearranges heavy horror elements in ways that awaken the second child inside as she slowly keeps the "deepest" of steps for as long as possible, keeping them outside in old-house noises and fawning glimpses and so small, a terrible burning, far out of reach. Moment by moment, it's a scary book. When the complete outline of the plot emerges, the tension drops as McMillan loses the advantage of being able to say, "There?"

The *Winter People* doesn't leave us with lasting dread. Still, McMillan grasps the power of Lovecraft's notion of a rural isolation as deep as it shatters "old, strange things" — even in the 21st century. The book's language is what will make you see and feel around. Notably — the most test of a ghost story.

While McMillan grabs us at a second level with the wreckage of the walking dead, Mills deals in a subtler, more creeping threat of horror. Some of the tales collected in *The Lord Came at Twilight* feature ghosts, cursed objects and other familiar folkloric motifs, but their real subject is the dread of the unknown.

That includes the mysterious "revived traffic" of religion. As the title indicates, Christian imagery and themes permeate Mills' stories, most are set in the Victorian era, when sleepers were comparatively rare. But the Protestant God emerges from these tales not as an antagonist of supernatural evil but a source of fear and trembling in his own right.

Lilo early American author Charles Brockden Brown, Mills seems fascinated

by the power a preacher wields over his flock when he dares to use the invisible. The agonistic narrator of "The Tempest Glass" writes that he learned as a child "not only to fear God, but to fear those — who would claim to understand His Will."

That fear is justified by stories in which charismatic preachers abuse their power. "A Soldier's Dream" is an evocative tale told in headline snippets supposedly found in a Vermont churchyard. From their pious exhortations, we learn how a minister's unbridled sermon wrought a sea change in his congregation. In "The Naked Goddess," a railroad man en route to Vermont stumbles into an unpopulated village whose residents have been living under another megade preacher's direction — with bizarre results.

Mills depicts remote Vermont farmsteads and villages as worlds unto themselves, islands of stasis. The actual island in the 1973 horror classic *The Shining* Alan Lovecraft embraced this notion, too. In "The Whisperer in Darkness" — to which Mills pays homage in his story "Whisperer" — the horror master evokes Lovecraft's jagged terrain as a set of unresolvable ruses left by an ancient alien race. Mills' approach to the region is more historically informed, however. Each landscape is a map of past tragedies for those who know how to read it. "In line, we die, and still the land remembers," says the narrator of "The Hollow." "These hills utter no rest, no peace." In "The Weymouth Vowings" the search of rituals across the state leaves us accented toward strands on a now-shaded soil road. "The Naked Goddess" takes place earlier, when railroads had yet to span Vermont, their progress hindered by "marauding farmers." The tracks stopped at Rutland, a settlement of "dirty,

unsavable buildings," facing the story's narrator to venture north on backroads.

For many miles the road continued to climb, winding through forgotten towns, villages left empty when "marionettes" inhabited and there was no longer enough food. I rode for hours and met no one. A great deadliness lay upon that deserted landscape, gathering over the shadowed farms and cemeteries that climbed the slopes of every forested hill. There was something of beauty there — in the path of a sapling through a fallen tree or the growth of moss on a weathered gravestone — but it was a grim beauty, founded in suffering and failure both beautiful and terrible, and indeed, more beautiful for being terrible.

Scarcely less exposed with terror in several stories where a spectral female figure induces an amiable narrator into proximity with the unknown. Mills draws tension from the familiar Victorian conflict between reason and carnal temptation, while giving his spectral figures human shadings and perhaps. Some of the stories read like thought experiments designed to bring intellectual concepts to life. For instance, "The Filling Ditch" both describes and demonstrates the folkloric concept of limbo, key to the workings of horror. In "John Black," an extreme interpretation of limbo, embodied in the checkered cover of a Revolutionary War pattern, becomes a metaphor in its own right.

Few of these tales deliver shocks, and few end with the sort of a bloody-escape map that readers may expect from short horror fiction. Instead, they cruise a

cosmos that begins "Dust From a Dark Flower" but all the legends from a fright film in the tradition of "body horror" but Mills' languid, neo-Victorian style keeps the gruesome elements at a distance.

What readers are likely to remember about these stories are not their plots but their places. That's not a criticism, *Wouldn't You? "True Love's Lie"* have been so unsettling without its fusion on Louisiana's swampy vamps? Working in his own medium, Mills produces despondence that are painterly and sometimes cinematic. In "House of the Caryatids" for instance, a young Yankee soldier's visit to a seemingly deserted Georgia plantation plays out with nightmarish detail and violence (see sidebar).

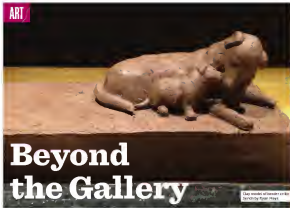
Mills' descriptions exhibit a lyrical and master looking at the book's illustrations by Ed Wayne Miller, a veteran of role-playing games and Miller's hyperbolic images have their own special charm, evoking the Sublime's Primeval landscapes that hide devils in the pre-Gameplay era.

It's haunting to see a young game author being published in such a strident format, and still seems haunting to see local writers venture back into the neo-postcard landscapes Lovecraft evoked. Call writers and high-speed internet may have arrived, but Vermont still has its dark places. **D**

INFO

The *Winter People* by Jennifer McMillan Doubleday 336 pages \$25.95

The *Lord Came at Twilight* by Daniel Mills illustrations by M. Wayne Miller Dark Horse Comics 244 pages \$16.99
Reviews.com editors \$45 More info at criticreviews.com



Clay model of creature under bench by Ryan Mays



Clay model of state sculpture by Gungo Michelbacher



Chris Mellers' model of 100-day model

Beyond the Gallery

A 1988 law brings art to state buildings—including Berlin's new psychiatric hospital

BY AMY LILLY

You may not have heard of the Vermont Art in State Buildings Act of 1988—but you're probably seen it in action. With art lawmakers guaranteed that up to \$50,000 of taxpayers' money would be devoted annually to the creation of art for the public spaces of new state buildings. Today, instead of encountering bare hallways and purely functional hallways, Vermonters entering many office buildings, courthouses, state college libraries and public safety facilities walk past site-specific paintings, local pines and decorative art.

Or walk in them. At the Vermont Arts Council in Montpelier, employees and visitors stroll across Kathleen O'Connor's 1988 marble and granite floor installation in the shape of an abstract flower. The VAC administers the program, selecting buildings and artists in partnership with the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services.

The idea wasn't new at the time of the program's inception. Iowa, for example, had passed an Art in State Buildings law nearly 10 years earlier. There, legislators had the foresight to tie expenditures to building costs (one-half of 1 percent of new construction funds is set aside for public art). Vermont's dollar allotment, meanwhile, has remained the same over the past quarter-century. If adapted for inflation, it would now be closer to \$95,000.

But granite sculptors Chris Miller

of Colby, Heather Ritchie of Plainfield, Ryan Mays and Gungo Michelbacher of Montpelier, and Giuliano Caschiani II of St. Albans aren't complaining. These artists were chosen to enhance the new Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital under construction in Berlin—one of three Art in State Buildings projects currently in progress. (The others are the Vermont Agency of Human Services in Waterbury and the Bennington Courthouse and State Office building.)

Last week, the sculptors' designs were approved by a legislative advisory committee—the final step before fabrication and

her pup at one end and another with a slugging bulldog puppy both by Mays.

Ritchie is fabricating a beaver dam for the sunken courtyard, with a single beaver pecking over the bench carved into one side. That space will also include Wicks the heron's water features with reconfigurable entries. Caschiani is making a chessboard bench for the activity yard that will sit on two knigh—i.e. horses—heads.

Not every new state building gets art under the program. Department of Buildings and General Services Commissioner Michael Obuchowski usually selects one or two buildings a year to recommend to the legislative advisory committee, according to Michele Bailey, the VAC's program director. The decision is based on factors such as geographic distribution and degree of public access.

Bailey began working at the arts council as an intern near the year the act was passed and has overseen Art-in-State Buildings since 1995. She notes that, since its inception, the program has funded roughly 50 artist visits to 30 buildings across Vermont.

The new psychiatric hospital is less accessible than most of the state's ones. Only the lobby will be visible to the general public; permission is required to enter the lobby. Nonetheless, Bailey points out, "slipping the patient here allows to see how fine it is."

The hospital is the first structure belonging to the Department of Mental Health to be selected for the program, according to

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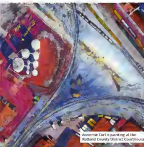
MICHELE BAILEY, VERMONT ARTS COUNCIL

installation. The sculptures will be in place by May 1, before the 25-bed facility starts accepting patients in June.

Miller, who leads the team of sculptors, notes that granite art seems fitting for the site, given that the new building is "three miles from Rock of Ages." Using lava gray from that quarry, as well as granite blocks uncovered on site during construction, the sculptors will fabricate animal-like mud works designed to welcome touch as well as use.

All of the pieces look adorable, if the clay models are any indication. For the day, Miller will create a "hibbitat tree"—essentially a couple rose trunk rendered in granite and populated by a rabbit, squirrel and bird. The lobby will feature one bench with a knave border collar curled around

SELECTIONS FROM THE ART IN STATE BUILDINGS PROGRAM FROM AROUND VERMONT



Anneke Carl's sculpture at the Rutland County District Courthouse



Patricia Ann Loomis' sculpture at the Vermont State Office Building in Montpelier



Dan Rosenzweig's and Patricia Ann Loomis' sculpture at the Vermont Department of Public Safety and Forestry's Lobby in Montpelier

the department's senior policy adviser, Judy Rosenzweig. As a Level 1 facility she says, the hospital will house "seriously psychologically ill patients."

Hence, the new building required a slightly different approach from previous projects. The VAC's call to artists generally includes a request to be "welcoming." For the hospital, it also requested proposals that would "strive to bring the natural world inside" and "reflect therapeutic and healing relationships."

Bakley explains that the call to bring nature inside reflected the architectural plans for the new hospital, which will have a secure exterior perimeter and two interior courtyards with access to shrub trees and rising greenery walls. The perimeter encloses the need for a wall or other enclosure, allowing the entry sculpture to be visible from the road.

"They designed [the hospital] with ample space for people to move around," Rosenzweig says. By contrast, the old Vermont State Hospital in Waterbury, finished during Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, "was very confined. That leads to stress," she notes.

The "therapeutic and healing" request aligned with the local art-selection committee, which in this case included mental advocates and what Rosenzweig calls "poets"—people with the lived experience of mental illness.

The committee also featured the usual suspects: architect Anthony Garner of the New York-based firm architecture, BGS project manager Mike Kuhn, and Rachel Moore, assistant curator at the Helen Day

Art Center in Stowe. Kathy Bakley, who will be the hospital's executive director of nursing, represented its employees.

Grants corner Bakley, 36, says he was "lightly surprised" when the committee selected the sculpture's animal-themed proposal. He has observed a recent preoccupation for stigmatism and alienation in public art. Mays, who works in the memorial industry and cures "a lot of animal subjects when I am not doing angels" characterizes his own realistic dogs as a "throwback."

The art-selection committee, however, liked the animal theme, which was meant to evoke therapy and companion animals. And, recalls Mays, "They told us from the beginning that representational work seemed to become effective with that population."

Bakley, who has worked as a psychiatric nurse for most of her 30-year career, has once in luck said a "blindest statement." But she does recall that a large part of the committee discussion focused on the suggestion that the art be "patient-accessible in a way that they could touch them."

The sculptors learned of other considerations, too, in the course of many meetings between the artists' teams and the art-selection subcommittee. "Patient safety was a huge priority," recalls Miller. "So we designed the animals with all softened edges and no limbs or ears sticking out in a way that would cause any injuries." The sculptors also accommodated the committee's concerns about "animals that stood up tall and might invite people to try to knock them down." The carved animals are all in prone or curled positions.

Miller, 55, has created pieces for public

parks and recently completed a crouching, enormous sculpture for the University of Vermont, and adhering firmly to a back-to-basics already "designed for durability," he says. "You anticipate people climbing on things to get their picture taken."

The committee, however, "mentioned a lot of things that patients might do, which were all foreign to me," Miller adds. One was that patients might attempt self-harm by jumping off a sculpture. For this reason, the water feature was redesigned to be less than three feet tall.

The meetings produced "a list of constructive knock and forth," as Miller puts it. Ritchie, 36, one of only two women currently working in Rosenzweig's memorial industry, first proposed the lower design when the committee needed a "large-ish design for the entry area."

The idea was "a departure from my other stone-work," says the artist, who makes sculptures and paintings with "history and program" elements for her own business, Bonnie Woo Art. (The name is a reference to Ritchie's Scottish heritage, her great-grandfather immigrated to Rome to carve granite.) The committee liked the design but decided to move it to the courtyard, and asked Ritchie to incorporate a bench.

"Sometimes you get a project where the client will say, 'We love your work, here's the budget, do what you want,'" comments Miller. "This was a really collaborative project. We would do sketches, they'd give feedback. We'd do models, they'd give more feedback. It was really generous and thing."

The result is something all parties hope will bring comfort to the patients. "I hope

the sculptures have a healing and calming effect on [the patients] that helps promote their recovery and return to their usual lives," Bakley says.

Hospital art won't be a novelty to Vermont's mental-health patients. Though the building will feel entirely different from the old hospital—not least because it meets current national standards by providing a patient with private rooms and bathrooms—it isn't in this respect. The former Vermont State Hospital had art as far back as Rosenzweig can recall.

"I have several decades of experience at that hospital. I was taken there through three back when it had over a thousand patients," Rosenzweig says. "The rooms always been art done, and they've always had art-therapy activities for the patients." She adds that she once bought a patient's painting for her home.

The sculptures created by Miller and his team are likely to surprise and please users of the new hospital such as Bakley, who was previously unaware of the Art in State Buildings program. The name says the artists and enjoy the third marble floor at the new Addison County Courthouse in Middlebury (by Lawrence Lounsbury and Allen Prid) every time she enters. "It's like by the way," says "that I had no idea of the process behind it. So that's been just fabulous to learn about."

"And isn't it amazing to see silent like that?" Bakley says, "being something like that in life that so many people can enjoy?" ☐

INFO
vermontartsculpture.org



Jordan Cook (left) and Christine Allen (right)

Whiplash

Theater review: *Venus in Fur*,
Vermont Stage Company

BY ALEX BROWN

All the whisks that might tempt you to see *Venus in Fur*—canon, sex, role reversal, erotic literature, auto-masochism—do apply, but the biggest draw turns out to be the acting. There's more sensation than plot and though the rubric of canon is, yes, Vermont Stage Company's production isn't alien. The play by David Ivis starts with revealing the meaning of the world he constructs, then arrives for training as, but the story does demonstrate the subtle changes that tip the balance of power in a relationship.

Vanda, an unpublished actress, arrives late to an audition for playwright-director Thomas, adaptation of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's 1873 erotic novel *Venus in Fur*. The playwright is about to leave and tries to dispatch Vanda, but she is oddly, playfully insistent on reading. So what if an one else is there? Thomas can read with her, she suggests by coincidence, she has the same name as the character in the play. And the just happens to have a period dress in her bag.

The story arc, thanks she knows the material. "It's masochism, right? Kind of punny? Perseus?" That explains her Sacher-Masochian gesture, a leather harness she wears when she takes off her costume. Instructed Thomas it at pains to explain the subtleties and significance of his material, it's far from pornography. And so the play begins to explore the power and sexual dynamics within a series of pain, desire and action, male and female,

Thomas and Vanda, and the script's characters, Eusebius and Vanda.

Thomas and Vanda make gradual transitions as they find themselves exploring the nature of dominance and submission in relationships. There are small, subtle cracks well short of the extremes of punishment. The paradox of control is both funny and perplexing. The characters demonstrate power in a submissive role, a form of surrender in a dominant one, and sensuality in both.

GULLIKSON TRANSFORMS MANY TIMES, LANDING IN EACH CASE WITH A CAT'S UNERRING BALANCE AND ASTONISHING EASE.

The comic-erotic energy, but the subject matter has inspired director Christine Allen to take a quiet, respectful approach, the better to showcase the skills of the two actors. Allen delicately presides as first what we might discuss as erotic scenes is actually for subtle. The gradual transition to the very first traces of pain or power is emphasized in this production. Thomas doesn't throw out his arms and legs. "Hurt me." He looks carefully at it crossing a busy street. He thinks about what he wants

and wonders if Vanda can give it to him. He remains wary but finds himself on his knees.

During McGovern's Vanda enters as a date, all looking into and legs, complaining about everything that made her late in a way that amplifies her incompetence instead of excusing it. She's hopelessly over-reached, and Thomas is sure to dismiss her. Yet there is something erotic about her. McGovern captures the audience just a little before her character convinces Thomas to give her a chance.

McGovern lives celebration with her to sit up to along on what seems to be an expensive pay role. It's a special pleasure to see her showing Vanda thinking on her feet. The play takes its first thrilling turn when the disembodied actress sits down to read her lines, and what comes out is an inspired monologue, complete with impeccable Austrian accent.

McGovern continues to unleash dazzling capabilities, not the least of which are the delicious changes when she breaks character to interrupt Thomas about his play. McGovern captures the humor of these lurches from profound to banal, and adds a little spice by demonstrating her own pleasure in stylishly stepping in and out of character.

Jordan Gullikson plays many layers for Thomas. He's coolly contemptuous of the shallow actresses who've previously

THEATER

auditioned for him, but this armor slowly falls away. His curiosity about Vanda is so great that he fails to notice she's collecting more confessions from him than she's making to him.

Gullikson is masterful at portraying his character's progress, one tiny sensation at a time. He starts out softly reading lines with Vanda, his fingers tracing the words of the script. When she urges him to try on a script, his first effort is clumsy and superficial. But as the night continues, Gullikson's accent becomes natural, then sly, as his loving skills to make a fifty-century seduction.

This play trades drama for power, and a viewer shouldn't dismiss all the surprises. But Gullikson transcends many times, landing in each case with a cat's unerring balance and astonishing ease.

It's come contact with an ending so ambiguous that it very nearly cheats us. The ending matters because the play contains a slippery riddle in which Thomas and Vanda become both naturally and supernaturally the audience on eventual grand outcomes, but (she perhaps hopes we'll be used by the pure comic oddity of it all). The story can be viewed either as Thomas' imagination come to life or as Vanda's vision of an actor's ultimate reward in a director. It's a neat enough trick that both ideas are possible.

Concomitant are the show's weak point, but other technical production elements are another. Allen's decision to stage the play with an all-playstyle layout puts the actors under clear inspection from an audience in close proximity. The arrangement may result in less heat than the director intended, but it does impose a chaotic form of observation.

All plays ask the audience to surrender disbelief. Agreeing to play along and be entertained is a small version of the agreement Eusebius makes to become Vanda's slave. For the sake of the experience, we remain entranced, without an interruption, for just under two hours. Even up to possible that resistance among the modern-day characters, the subjects of the script, and the roles of actor and director they assume, and those vibrations are enchanting. But it's up to the actors to make this wild and unswerving story feel complete. Thomas and Vanda discover the nature of seduction, but in the end it is the viewer who's seduced. **B**

INFO

Venus in Fur by David Ivis. Directed by Christine Allen. Produced by Vermont Stage Company. Through March 30. Wednesdays through Saturdays 7:30 p.m. Tickets and donations: 802-253-3131. Tickets: 802-253-3131. Website: www.vstg.com

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Left to right: Lauren Miller, Kaitlyn Rieck, Craig Wells, David Linder, and Alex Hadden

Comic Relief

Theater review: *Urinetown: The Musical*, UVM Department of Theatre

BY ALEX BROWN

The University of Vermont Department of Theatre has pulled out all the stops to present a raucous production of *Urinetown*, the musical that scored two Tony awards in 2002 for Mark Hollman (music and lyrics) and Greg Kotis (book and lyrics). It playfully dresses the possibility of putting a message in a musical by setting up a corporate ruben (oo-over the top to fear and too hilarious to hate, wrapping everything in a brilliant parody of the musical art form itself).

The show takes place in a city that is suffering a decades-long water shortage. The government has outlawed private bathrooms to conserve water and has obliged corporate giant Urine Good Company by outlawing relief outdoors. UGC has the monopoly on public bathrooms everyone

must pay to pee. Sharp class lines emerge, and the story starts at one of the most miserable public facilities, where the poor must daily scrape up the ever-rising cost of relieving their bladders.

It's a potent metaphor for corporate control, allowing for hyperbole that would be severe but for the musical's higher artistic principle: irony. As in a typical musical, there is a love story, some social commentary, two large groups of people with opposing aims and a chance for a happy ending. Though all these beats are dotted out to the audience, they come with a prior: We have to laugh at what we love.

A typical day at the ruben house at the helm of UGC, Caldwel B. Cladwell, involves bribing politicians, amassing more wealth and suppressing the people with the help of a police force steered by Officer

Lockstock. Cladwell has a touch but fresh-from-college daughter, Hope, the wife of corporate success. "I never realized that large monopolizing companies could be such a force for good in the world," she chirps.

Meanwhile, struggling musician-poor cartoonist Bobby Strong has just seen his father headed away. Old Man Strong took the cash to pee, so police march him off to work in Urinetown. It's a tragic fate, as we later learn. When Hope and Bobby fall in love, and the cost of peeing is lifted higher still, something's gotta give. And there is singing and dancing to prove it.

Director Gregory Rameau never misses a chance to exaggerate: a convention of natural theater. Yet the result is not unrelenting sarcasm but an enthusiastic celebration of how freely an audience gives its heart to emotion laid bare through music. Rameau manages to balance humor and ridicule, and establishes the crucial structure for real theater characters with objectives.

The show's prima comedic singer is Berick. Berick's epic character Berick is easy to mock for his large political ambitions, or his emphasis on individual instead of emotional reactions to art itself,

as this production shows Berick's practice of calling attention to distressed artists is principally a way of making us curious. When actors break the frame and speak about the story they're in, when a sign saying "Secret Hideout" appears onstage, or when one looser burst into a musical song about musical songs, the play is laying bare its own workings, as if daring us to be sited just by them. Such self-referential moments delight, and they teach us how theater works.

Berick wanted to go a step farther and reveal the ideology beneath theatrical conventions. Urinetown turns that notion on its head by mocking dramas of political change. Once class struggle is a dance number, it's not exactly philosophy. But Berick's technique works regardless. Noticing the artificiality of a play helps us stand back to wonder to interpret the effect on us. As Officer Lockstock says when introducing the singing, "It's my town. Any town that would be in a musical." The overt claim of naturalism explodes the possibility of naturalism, distancing us and reminding us that we should question the familiar.

The use of a narrative in Urinetown gives every aspect of the show a modern, ironic slant. Rameau doesn't lay it too thick, and Joel Rameau gives the role

of Lockstock, a sturdy, pleasant woman (Kane's only moment of extrajude comes when he refers the finale of a song, and actually loses the effect of demonstrating the restraint he's maintained up until then).

The heater between Lockstock and squeakily cute Little Sally (a delightful Katie Bossett) never fails to entertain even as it deconstructs the show. When Lockstock confronts Little Sally with the harsh reality of the musical's subject matter, she has the bright idea as a little girl's been given so many lines as I have, then it will have for dream?

As Bobby Strong, Andrew Russo is every inch the hero, handsome, humble and energetic. He has a special knack for directing movement to its essence, with no wasted effort. His winning combination of comic and vocal skills is showcased in his scenes

with Hope, played with great wit by Gena Lovvick. In the play's denouement, the beauty of their journey comes fully into focus with the absurdity of the lyrics. But they go right on to sell the number, comically immersed in the story.

Lovvick's expressive face is a highlight, even as she goes over her mouth hole to do it.

Broadway mainstay Craig Wells joins the company to play Chadwell, with up-tempo glees. Wells is wonderful, and it's a credit to the stellar ensemble that he doesn't eclipse the talented cast but works beautifully with them.

A lateral act by Jeff Madenier has cleverly staged and well-chosen projections. Its anchor is the tired old of the public classroom, and it's a high complement to note that you can almost smell it.

Minda Thaler's costumes are outstanding. From Chadwell's spits to woolly Little

Sally's grumpy plaid jumpsuits, his choices and the costume crew's execution provide each character with depth. This decision to use the styles of the 1930s, including left-wing causes and the Depression, accentuates the impossibility of social progress, as keeping with the show's tongue-in-cheek political message.

Tony Nodle's smart, lively choreography moves the legs cast around to reveal its glees as deeper, in unison or in solo. Her clever ideas include building a dance number around the five fiddlers that Chadwell's employees carry. The fiddlers are well-matched the best cartoon, and when they're held in contrived arms, flailing or doing through the air, Nodle turns a hand-drawn sketch into an expression of joyous recreation of the corporate ladder.

The musical ensemble, led by music director Nate Venti, brings the show's songs to life with a coherent feel. No individual tune is especially memorable, but that's because even the melodies and arrangements are references to other musicals. The suspenseful Act One finale is a jumble of musical conventions, with Lee Maitland closing out on top. An encore will be called

"Buns, Pretzels, Buns" shows a gaggle by way of "We Doves, You're Rockin' the Boat" from *Gypsy* and *Dolls*, while "What Is Unwritten?" has a comic parody to *Phantom of the Opera*'s "To Life," a song about the very opposite idea. It's the presentation more than the tune that holds "Shall That Girl" with *West Side Story*'s "Cool," but the finger snaps seal the deal.

You need not spend the show hanging down the references. It's better to surrender to the humor and irreverence. The musical is so unapologetic about pushing trouble to the highest pitch, and the cast holds nothing back, even as they demonstrate the sheer silliness of it all. **D**

INFO

Underdog: The Musical music and lyrics by Marc Shaiman; book and lyrics by Greg Katin; directed by Gregory Herman; produced by the University of Wisconsin Department of the Arts. March 22 through 23, 2009 at 8 p.m., at the Hovell Lyric Theatre, UW-Madison. \$40 to \$100; students \$10. Info: 608.262.4400, www.wisc.edu/thearts

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App Surfing in the UV

White River Junction's dining options gain critical mass

BY CORIN HIRSCH

Top Caffe, and people might be pulling on cigarettes outside CJs at Tim's Wheeler's or the Piling Station Bar and Grill. Occasionally the Briggs Opera House let loose a crowd after a Northern Stage play, or a band played at the Main Street Museum. Outside special events and First Fridays, though, "White River nightlife" was an oxymoron. This was certainly not a town I thought could ever host my favorite sport, app surfing—I think a pub crawl, but focused on food.

Over time, White River's nights have changed. Elise Restaurant arrived five years ago, followed by Tupelo Mass Hall. Soon after, chef Eric Harfing opened Tuckerbox on a central corner. Almost instantly it became the preferred meeting place in town for students from the Center for Cartoon Studies, workers and passersby alike.

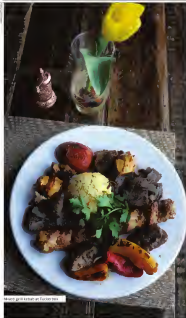
Yet unlike its predecessors in the space—an Indian restaurant and an African eatery—Tuckerbox didn't serve dinner. This was a puzzle to me since the cafe was one of my favorite daytime venues. I could easily imagine it daily lit on a snowy evening, wine glasses on every table.

Word and Jackie Olney may have shared that vision. The Olneys opened hatched Kolob House in Essex Junction two years ago, but the Upper Valley is their home. Last November, they purchased Tuckerbox from Harfing and put big plans into motion.

The changes were subtle at first. A mocha frier and kolaba appeared on the menu alongside the standard offerings of granola parfaits, grilled cheese sandwiches, pastries and braised coffee. Then, in mid-February the Olneys rolled out full dinner service, drawing on the culinary juju of chef Mehmet Kurda—who helped them open the Kolob House up north. "This is something we've always wanted to do," says Vard Olney, who has been in the UV for close to a decade.

I couldn't tell the Olneys I'm confident, "I wish Tuckerbox was open at night, and I wish it served wine." Fortunately, Olney is a passionate advocate of Turkish wines, which now compose the majority of the list at Tuckerbox. More than a few come from Karaköprü, a well-known organic Turkish winery.

BY JENNIFER WILSON



Meat, grill, eat at Tuckerbox

"Oh, sorry we're booked solid!" This wasn't what I expected to hear last Friday night when I called White River Junction's Tuckerbox to inquire about a dinner reservation. I'm so accustomed to wandering in during the day for tea that I wasn't even sure the place took reservations for its newly instituted dinner service. I assumed it would be a breeze to arrive without warning.

Wrong. Ever since starting dinner service last month, Tuckerbox has been

alarming. So it felt like a big-city triumph when a host announced he could find seats for us at the counter.

When I first moved to the Upper Valley more than a decade ago, I quickly developed a crush on this town of brick and open sky—with its salvage place, its Polka Dot Restaurant, the trains that rumbled and hissed through it several times a day. At night, though, White River seemed pretty dead, at least to my untrained eyes.

A few diners could always be spotted behind the windows of the Tip



SIDEdishes

BY CORIN HIRSCH & ALICE LEVITT

Beers of Legend

FOUR QUARTERS BREWING CO. OF CO. IN BURLINGTON

Quick: What's paterbeer? What's the Latin name for hops? And why the hell makes cracked red ale around here?

The answer to all three questions can be found inside 150 West Canal Street in Wisconsin, where **FOUR QUARTERS BREWING** is proud. Last weekend, its stable of beers — including Zanis, Horn of the Moon and Opus Dei — alternately resurrects historical styles and evokes mythological figures.

Founder and brewer **ERIK ECKERT** isn't only a beer geek, but a mythology and astronomy buff. "My interests outside of beer and food are sort of just trying to wrap my head around the universe," says Eckert, who dedicates himself fascinated with the intersection of religion and beer — that is, with beers brewed by monks.

To wit, he's brewed a paterbeer — which means "father's beer" — a low-alcohol abbey ale traditionally brewed by Trappist monks to be consumed within their monasteries (Eckert's version, called *Opus Dei*, is a sessionable 6-percent-alcohol beer).

Eckert borrowed the Latin name for hops, *Humulus lupulus*, for his *Opus Lupulus*, a 3.8-percent-alcohol ale "that retains a spicy character from the yeast but has a good healthy dose of hops," he says.

His brewing sometimes draws an unusual technique: Smoked salts lend their flavor to *Crabapple*, a smoked, hoppy red ale. "When it's freshly poured, there's a big aroma of hops, but they're sort of floating and drift away in the beer versus up and the smoke



Four Quarters Brewing

character comes out," Eckert says. (Surprisingly, the first batch is already gone.)

Other Four Quarters beers include *Horn of the Moon*, a wheat beer brewed with barley and wheat and flavored with orange peel and mint. Despite its monastic-sounding moniker, it's actually named for a pond near Montpelier.

Janus 1 is a "fruit-sauce" brewed with oats and chamomile, while *Janus 2* is the same beer brewed with red wine yeast. (*Janus 1* is currently at a tap at the brewery.)

Eckert has been turning out his beers in the wee hours, the only time he can steal between his full-time job as a web designer at **BOB & JAMES** and caring for his

two young children. His schedule has him brewing from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. and going to work at 9 a.m. "It's just what I need to do for me," he says.

Currently, visitors to Four Quarters can taste samples and fill growlers, but Eckert plans to start bottling soon. His warehouse dreams of kegs may not want to hold their breath, however. Eckert is committed to self-distribution to a small number of accounts, but not for a few months at least.

Beer-wise, Eckert has yet to roll out *Flour de Lys*, which he calls "kind of a hybrid between a Berliner weisse and a saison," and a series of sour beers.

The Four Quarters tasting room, a wooden bar a few

steps away from the four barrel brewing system, is open on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoon. Find beers on the brewery's Facebook page.

—CJH

Bogotá Bites

COLOMBIAN CUISINE HITS VERMONT

This winter's success of anticipation is nothing new for **JANITA GALLOWAY**. Her first seven years were spent in chilly, rainy Bogotá, Colombia. Galloway moved to Shelburne two years ago from Seattle. Now, under the banner of **EMBOMBANADO**, she's sharing her native cuisine with her new neighbors, east — or snow — or shore.

For the past four years, the Seattle Culinary Academy grad and former event planner has been busy raising her two young sons. Two weeks ago, Galloway officially went back to work — by opening her mother's Colombian chowline eatery.

"My husband wants to call it 'told-me,' she says of the shorthand delicacy. Each time Galloway crafts a chowline, she follows a recipe written in Spanish on a note card by her mother. "It's very specific — the timing — everything about it has to be done exactly," Galloway says. "But it's foolproof every time."

Galloway's mother and aunt began selling their very cakes in Bogotá more than 40 years ago. While their version was topped with an intense, raspberry sauce, Galloway uses her refined palate to create her own success. Her menu currently includes raspberry (for aorta version), a blueberry sauce spread with cardamom, and

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App Surfing by PAUL

Ötzy cheerfully pours out samples on request, bridging the gulf of unfamiliarity with his infectious enthusiasm.

These grapes bore strange (to us) names, but each one we tried was fine-tuned and balanced. The Çankaya tasted like a floral, beguiling mishmash of Sauvignon Blanc, Tannat and maybe a touch of Chardonnay. A juicy dry rose (made from a grape I'll never be able to pronounce — Çakarnar) was a vibrant complement to many of the meats. We guzzled them faster than was probably wise.

For app surfers like us, Tudorbar offers a treasury of choices, and many come piled together on the meze platters — a riot of colors and textures served with a crisp puff of sesame-dusted lavash. The stuffed grape leaves were startlingly fresh and crispness scored, while the creamy bögara, a dill-flecked yogurt dip, swept the palate with tang. It contrasted starkly with the smoke and bite of a Turkish tomato salsa.

Plated alone in *pochas* (bowl), a cylinder of feather-light fried pastry stuffed

with garlicky orange and creamy farmer's cheese (Kashar), and seasoned with red-pepper coats. With its crust made mostly of butter and a meat-filled interior, this is a dish you want to inhale — and we did.

Despite our stated focus on small plates, we wanted to try at least one of Tudorbar's entrees. Though the tomato-based casseroles called *gözleme* were alluring, we settled on a plate of charred protein — the mixed-grill kebab. It was a succulent panini of shaved lamb, tubes of spicy chicken *adana*, rounds of meatball and buttery cubes of swordfish. Each bite deserved a corresponding sip of Yakult, a light-bodied red

Ötzy looked stricken at the idea that we would leave without dessert — but love is a specialty — but we had other places to go on our tour of White River's new nightlife.

At the same time that Tudorbar changed hands, Harding sold the nearby Tip Top Café to Edna McGaddin. She was at the hostess station on Friday night, and the menu suggested shird decided to stick with the general theme of new American fare. Wisely so. The fries at Tip Top are among the best in the state — buttered and fried, shepherded with salt and herbs and served in a paper cone with a pat of milk.

My friend Kate, whom I will

hereafter call "Sager Palate," was a Tip Top die-voguer but quickly noted the kitchen's secret weapon: "Don't you taste the sugar on these?" she asked. I hadn't until she mentioned it — the sweetness was almost undetectable. We scooped on the fries and a plate of luscious braised pork belly over French lentils before departing for our third and final stop of the evening.

If we had had more room in our stomachs, we might have stopped at Than Whacker's for a burger, or at C & S Pizzeria for a slice, or even at the newly installed Big Pappy's BBQ. But, in the interest of self-preservation, we bypassed those for Kikori. This wine bar and restaurant occupies the Freight House, a building that occasionally trembles when blocks of salt are unloaded from salvaged cars out back. Since Kikori is a few blocks from the center of town, it's a minor miracle that the spacious restaurant has survived. But then, such



More food after the classified section PAGE 47

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to crisco-dusted pork flat Mignon and Caponata are strong draws.

So is bartender Keith Troy Walsh, another transplant from the north. Walsh joined at American Flatbread Burlington's Hearth before migrating to the Upper Valley with his wife. A bearded, booming presence behind the bar, he set us up with a pair of dessert wines (Eden Ice Cider Merlot and late-harvest Tannat) while we waited for next installment of small plates. And these were sweet: such a banana Foster bread pudding in rose-corned sauce and an ice cream sandwich.

By this point in our feasting, I couldn't manage more than a few bites. With its mellow mix of gutters and friendly, late-night wine, Eden seemed like the ideal place to end an evening in "Bar Blanca." As we snatched and sipped, we watched conversations from Tapelo just door-slip into the darkness beside the tracks, doing Lord knows what. It was people watching, WKJ style. **D**

INFO

Tuckertown, 1 South Main Street, White River Junction 350-4541 tuckertown Vermont.com
 Top Tap Cafe, 65 North Main Street, White River Junction 350-3332, toptapcafevermont.com
 River 150 South Main Street, White River Junction 350-3336 river150vermont.com



Artistic at Tuckertown

SIDE dishes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

a maple-cranberry sauce that also makes with **PALMERS** **SALAD-DRESSING** syrup.

Palmer's, located on the border of Hinsburg and Shelburne, is the first retail outlet to carry Colombian Bate's olive. Marketed in Gallop's's cream sauce. The chef also takes private orders and is looking into summer farmers markets.

Gallop's says she hopes to soon have options for diners who don't crave sweets. Within a year, she plans to sell mops, flat corn-cakes filled or topped with a

vegetable medley of cheeses, veggies and meats.

Gallop's says she also plans to find a source for guinea, the Colombian herb she needs to make ajaca, her favorite warming chicken-and-potato soup. If all goes well, by next winter she'll be helping Vermonters fight the chill, Colombian style.

—A.L.

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Overstuffed from Colombian Bate

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Confection Perfection

Little Sweets chef Andrew LeSturgeon has two winning equations for pastries

BY ALICE LEVITT

The dough is too fluffy but tender, the filling spicy with cinnamon. Bits of the Wood chef Alex Wernstedt can't stop raving about the sticky, glazed cinnamon buns from pastry chef Andrew LeSturgeon. "I try not to eat one of these cinnamon rolls every day. They're so delicious, so rich," he says.

Luckily (or unluckily) for him, Wernstedt gets to indulge when the buns are hot out of the oven. Bits of the Wood owns Little Sweets, a line of LeSturgeon's creations that is market as its own brand. Each morning, LeSturgeon and his team prepare their buns at the Burlington Hen of the Wood and deliver them to Hotel Vermont, the Marriot Courtyard Burlington Harbor and Magalloway Cafe. By discipline, Little Sweets' voters make their way to the Waterbury location of Wernstedt's restaurant, along with school components and some senior fans.

Wernstedt and his team call LeSturgeon himself "little sweets" with irony-laced affection — while he's certainly sweet tempered, the 30-year-old railroad stands a far from little at 6-foot-5. And when it comes to pastry, he's no rail. LeSturgeon adapted and perfected his cinnamon bun from the recipe he used when he worked at New York City's *Juliana Restaurant*, famous for its cream.

Such traditional crowd pleasers are half of Little Sweets' winning equation. "The cinnamon bun is one plus one is two," LeSturgeon explains. "People

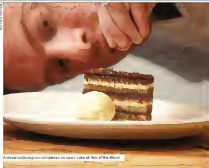
are expecting one as an answer. Their real value is giving people what they're expecting — what they had two years ago and what they want tomorrow."

But LeSturgeon also likes to offer customers what he calls "one plus one equals three" — creations as amazing as they are unexpected. Caramelized brioche, with buns, frangipane and non-traditional cream certainly fits the bill. He says he learned to challenge people's palates from Jean-Georges Vongerichten, the renowned French chef who invited LeSturgeon's hire at *Belknap* and invited him to join his team at this new restaurant *Perry* fit.

To explain the unorthodox equation, LeSturgeon cites a combination he's currently working with: yucca and Thai chili. "When I tasted yucca for the first time, I was like, 'What? What is that?'" he recalls. The other chef's unique, tangy flavor creates heat and sweet to yield a whole greater than the sum of its parts, the chef says. "It makes you think as you level a new color you didn't know about. A new flavor combination equals a new experience in the brain."

LeSturgeon says he'll be looking with excitement back early in his tenure at *Perry* fit where he worked with "rockstar" pastry chef Johnny Izzuti. By the time he meets his current employer, Laurent Hulse, he had learned to balance the two equations.

Hulse found LeSturgeon as executive



Andrew LeSturgeon completes a more cake at Hen of the Wood

pastry chef for his Fig & Olive chain in 2006. The restaurant group currently has six restaurants in New York and southern California. When Hulse visits another in Chicago that summer, LeSturgeon will be there. He still holds his title at Fig & Olive, even as he supplies desserts to both Hen of the Wood restaurants, *Jasper* at Hotel Vermont and the upcoming *Blue Northeast* seafood at the Marriot.

"He's a true gem," Hulse says of LeSturgeon by phone from Los Angeles. "It's wonderful for Vermont to have this wonderful person among your community. Keep him as long as you can."

So far, LeSturgeon has had little trouble balancing his two worlds. "They pay me well to answer the phone and develop some recipes," he says of Fig & Olive, estimating that he devotes two to four hours a week to what he considers a consulting job. He's credited as the pastry chef at Fig & Olive's menu, but when he wants to kitchen, he says, he has the savings experience of working with a staff he's never met.

LeSturgeon missed the opening of the

Newport Beach Fig & Olive last December because he was so busy handling holiday dining at Hen of the Wood. In Chicago, he says, he'll be on hand to train the staff as preparing his interpretations of dishes from Hulse's Mediterranean childhood, such as crime briker chocolate with cream and peaches, and warm sweetpotato with olive oil potato. "His relentless passion to create flavor and create a amazing," says Hulse. "He's a great talent."

It may come as a surprise, then, to hear that Hulse was surprised when LeSturgeon took a Thoreau-esque turn in 2002 and bought an off-the-grid cabin in Lenox. "I told him, 'That would be wonderful for you,'" the restaurant recalls. "It was the right move for him. He likes this type of nature and serenity."

A few months after his surprising real estate purchase, LeSturgeon decided to spend a long weekend in Vermont to visit old Haverhill Study With New York University shut down, the chef ended up staying longer than expected, and he realized he might want to make Vermont his

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fall-time home. On a whim, he answered an ad seeking a pastry chef in Windsor, a town he'd never heard of. The restaurant was *Here of the Wood*.

LeTourneau's stance, which also includes a brief early stint working for Princeton Depot, was undeniably impressive. But Weinstein looked at it with a schwa. "When people come to Vermont [from New York], they always look pretty good on paper because we don't have a lot of super-experienced people here," he explains. "But there's some times a deeper reason that they're leaving their job in the city."

LeTourneau quickly proved to be the real deal. At the time, *Here of the Wood* didn't have the luxury of employing a full-time pastry chef, so LeTourneau worked part-time until the Burlington location opened, six months after its originally planned debut.

It was in Windsor that LeTourneau gradually perfected what he now says is his favorite dessert at *Here of the Wood*: the open cake. The many layers of banana-and-cream spread, chocolate ganache and maple butter cream are moist with maple-syrup, making it a sweet unique to Vermont. A scoop of

intense vanilla ice cream serves as fuel to the darker flavors of chocolate and maple in its evocative understated description. "It's veryifiable."

LeTourneau charged his living in Vermont hasn't changed his general approach, but local ingredients have made their way into his desserts. He's beguiled by crab apples, which he compares in their tanginess to yuzu, kaffir lime and caramelized white chocolate. He uses the miniature apples paired with honey in sorbet or serves them roasted alongside tiny glazed dumplings, which he found an idea he brought from an elderly Indian street vendor in New York.

Little Sweet's has infiltrated the two Westport Hospitality hotels adjacent to *Here of the Wood*. *Amper* serves LeTourneau's uncommonly smooth ice creams and other desserts, as well like The company stocks counters at both hotels, and petite restaurant packages of financiers, brownies, shortbread cookies and caramels have replaced the typical turn-down-server chocolate.

Three Tastes Treatery in Windsor and Burlington's also used to purvey Little Sweet's, too. Now that those restaurants have closed, the only place other than Cherry Street to score a bit of LeTourneau's pastries is Burlington's sister *Magnum*.

His of the Wood cook Owen Spencer is the one who proposed that Little Sweet's supply the Maple Street cafe, where he's a regular customer. When LeTourneau brought anger, Magnum's co-owner Giovanni Anger was bewitched over

remembered general manager Gary Goldsmith. "The way he really sold himself, he didn't know that was where *Here of the Wood* was. When she tried them, she was like, 'Wow, these are a little bit handmade. They remind me of *LeTourneau*'."

Goldsmith says the priorities are just what Magnum's needed, both in quality and price point. Daily offerings include crunchy, almond-topped maple bostocks, the famous cinnamon buns, and a sensory version of some. Filled with slices of *Here of the Wood* hand-dipped Colby-Jack cheese and melted Grayson and Graham Village cheddar. Bostocks also include several flavors of doughnuts and cookies.

LeTourneau typically delivers the news himself after he begins his day at 7 a.m. — a dawnright heavenly still compared with classic bakery's hours. Luckily, his "yawn got on Little Sweet's" Nicole Coatsworth, is happy to get up at 3 a.m. to begin the heavy lifting of each day's bake, he says.

Little Sweet's relationship with Magnum is a symbiotic one, general manager Goldsmith recently started making weekly visits to *Here of the Wood* to help train employees in exemplary coffee

service.

As LeTourneau helps manage Little Sweet's and learns from the business-driven Fig & Olive brand, he's begun thinking about starting his own dessert company. "I'm almost ready for a business of my own," he says. "I'm not yet. I have some things in mind that I need to iron out. We all have demons, and there are a couple left in me that I need to get to know a little bit better before I ask somebody for a quarter of a million dollars."

LeTourneau says he dreams of a multi-unit business model that would showcase the best of his land home. He's New York City and Vermont. As much as he misses the easy access to anything he craves in the big city, LeTourneau says he's found a dependable home in his new home. Those include beautiful farms, his tiny solar-powered cabin with no running water and his devoted staff, which has learned to appreciate his notion of slow-brewed oat ribbons in the kitchen. (That's his favorite.)

Weinstein expresses doubt that he could help LeTourneau open a bakery in the near future, given all he has on his plate with his two restaurants. Halasz says he'll support LeTourneau in any way he can. "He should have a pastry shop of his own. He was talented," says the restaurateur.

We can only hope that, when it happens, LeTourneau's flying location will be in the Green Mountains, where the quickly pitiless fits like a stone-topped bannery in its own.

"It's a truck," Weinstein says. "I love him." So do Vermont drivers. ☐

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etc.

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As a boy, Israel Galván dreamt of becoming a soccer player. But in 1994, the then 21-year-old son of celebrated flamenco dancers found himself drawn to the family profession. These days, the native of Seville, Spain, is widely regarded as one of the world's foremost flamenco practitioners. Interweaving new gestures and rhythmic patterns with traditional steps, the award-winning dancer presents his signature work, *La Edad de Oro* (The Golden Age). Accompanied by a singer and a guitarist on an otherwise bare stage, Galván elevates the genre with a stylistic hybrid that the *Goyle Express* claims "propels him into the league of genius."

ISRAEL GALVÁN

Friday, March 23, 7 p.m. See www.fish productions.com for future dates.
 Fisher Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, 18
 College St. | T: 603-442-5626, 623-643-2423; <http://dartmouth.edu>



CHRIS SMITHER

Less Is More

Chris Smither says of his finger-picked guitar style that it's "one third Lightnin' Hopkins, one third Mississippi John Hurt and one third me." Having maintained this approach to the acoustic blues for the past 40 years, the singer-songwriter shares slick studio tricks in favor of pared-down songs driven by his distinct, raspy voice. Distilling the essence of his New Orleans roots and the 1960s folk scene into a sound all his own, Smither remains accessible to a multigenerational fan base. With 15 albums to his name, the nine-times-cited artist shows no signs of slowing down.

CHRIS SMITHER

Saturday, March 22, 8 p.m. | at Town Hall
 Theater in Haverbury St. | T: 603-629-
townhallconcerts.com

Plugged In

In the face of reality television and an ever-evolving dependency on screen time, Lucky Plush Productions' dance theater presents *Cinderella 2.0*. Humorous and thought-provoking, this complex consideration of contemporary culture reflects the award-winning troupe's gift for tackling sensitive subject matter with intelligence and superlative ability. Deemed "a shrewd and witty commentary on recovering the humanity from an increasingly mechanized way of life" by the *Chicago Tribune*, the piece blurs the line between the audience and performers. This shared space creates a hyper-realized world in which modern media's voyeuristic tendencies leave us watching while

LUCKY PLUSH

Friday, March 23, 7 p.m. | at Alexander Theatre, Lyndon State College
 \$14-29 | Info: 248-8600; luckyplush.com; Also Saturday, March 22, 8 p.m. | at
 Flynn MusicStage in Burlington | \$14-30 | Info: 802-8600; flynnstage.org



MAR.21 | MUSIC

Musical Melting Pot

Hiding from Tucson by way of Trinidad, Drew Goss has been a force for calypso that spans cultures and continents. The founder and front man of Koko Brown honors his musical heritage with a tribute to the syncretized rhythms of his youth. Incorporating diverse influences that range from hip-hop beats and jazz to funk and disco, the ensemble blends skilled instrumentation with polished production. Undeniably catchy, the resulting mashup informs the acclaimed *Independerance* and the recently released *Jambie* in the *Johannes* (rich with social commentary and no indie-rock sensibility, these made-to-folklore tunes of the past reshape their place in the future).

KOKO BROWN

Friday, March 21, 7:30 p.m. | at Southwick Hall Performance, UVM,
 Riddstone Campus in Burlington | \$12-22 | Info: 802-566-6566; bymusic.org

calendar

SAT 10/26/10

5 REED HEDDER WIGMORE FESTIVAL GALA & CONCERT La Musica Musica Musica! Combines top-string talent with gourmet fare and live and video audience interaction for the GMA's Top 100 Award Gala Fete. Whitehead Gardens, 8 p.m.; dinner and performance. Tickets \$500-\$100. 490-7072

KEITHA STONE Singer-songwriter Stone Mason and father, Peter, bring songwriting like a first-hand view of the world. Whitehead Gardens & Concert House, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-3444 ext. 3

CLARENCE BELLAR & BARKING This is a great concert and parents & kids will love it. A performance of the world's best and most beautiful songs. Whitehead Gardens & Concert House, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-0252

REINVENTED ATLAS This innovative five-piece quartet presents a collection of songs from their new, original and fully revised album. Whitehead Gardens, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-0252

ROCKING TRADITION: FOLKING OUT "Selected songs from a variety of folk artists from the 1960s to the 1990s." Whitehead Gardens & Concert House, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-0252

outdoors

NY ZEPHYRUS Native born to the United States, this is a challenging obstacle run for the outdoors. Appropriate for anyone. Contact info: 492-0252. Whitehead Gardens, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-0252

performers

JO FORTIN, DEBORAH & SCANNING WITH BLUE The Fortin family presents a collection of songs from their new album. Whitehead Gardens & Concert House, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-0252

artists

REALLY LIVE MUSIC SITES From the world's most famous live music community, we're bringing you the best live music from the world's most famous live music community. Whitehead Gardens & Concert House, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-0252

VIRGO POLICE ASSOCIATION NIGHT The Virgo Police Association is a non-profit organization that provides support and resources for law enforcement officers. Whitehead Gardens & Concert House, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-0252

theater

THE 100 YEARS A collection of songs, stories, music and more highlights the story of the 100th anniversary of the United States. Whitehead Gardens & Concert House, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-0252

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE The musical "Anything Is Possible" is a story of a young boy who dreams of becoming a professional athlete. Whitehead Gardens & Concert House, 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Info, 492-0252

CAROL PETERSON See 10/26/10

CHICKEN THE MUSICAL See 10/26/10

GOOD PEOPLE See 10/26/10

JOCK IN THE HOLE: A VIBRANT DAY IN THE HOLE See 10/26/10

THE MET LIVE IN HD SERIES See 10/26/10

NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: THE BIRD See 10/26/10

THE MET LIVE IN HD SERIES See 10/26/10

THE MET LIVE IN HD SERIES See 10/26/10

THE MET LIVE IN HD SERIES See 10/26/10

musical

THE MET LIVE IN HD SERIES See 10/26/10

SUN.23

activities

FLY & FLYER See 10/26/10

FLY & FLYER See 10/26/10

and

AFTERNOON JAZZ CAFE & PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT See 10/26/10

THE MET LIVE IN HD SERIES See 10/26/10

community

THE MET LIVE IN HD SERIES See 10/26/10

dance

SALAH FOUZ BACHCHE See 10/26/10

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCING See 10/26/10

etc.

HARVEST GALLERY See 10/26/10

RENTAL/STAY/STAY

RENTAL/STAY/STAY

RENTAL/STAY/STAY

RENTAL/STAY/STAY

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 Join us for a special event about the
 stability and many plans found at the mountain.
 Kent Tamm, Nelson Olson, David Brown, Glen
 Norstrom. 1300 p.m. Free. Info: 498-2020

**SAVING THE SPRING: SPOKESWHEEL FASHION
 SHOW** Save your wardrobe for the spring
 styles and a select wardrobe at this benefit for
 the Spokane and Synchro Society. Friends of
 Furbie Middle School. South Burlington. 1:00-4:00 p.m.
 \$5. Info: 507-5626

NATURALIST HISTORY HOME SHOW Jan. 5-12/22

festivals & fairs

ANNUAL AFFAIRS FAIR Spent summers
 enjoying the view? If not, enjoy it today! Sun, Jan. 5
 and now at this fabulous extravaganza. Proceeds
 benefit the Deane Community School and the
 Deane Elementary School. Seaside. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 \$5 per person. Info: 498-3353

MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL Jan. 5-12/22

films

YOUNG-BOSSIE FESTIVAL Canada's common
 language film. Jan. 10-11 p.m. at the University of
 Guelph. 10:00-11:00 p.m. and 11:00-12:00 p.m.
 General. South Burlington. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info:
 523-2754

BARBIE MOVIE FESTIVAL Jan. 10-12/22
 10:00-12:00 p.m.

food & drink

MAPLE SYRUP Friends of the University of
 Guelph. maple festival. 10:00-12:00 p.m. and
 11:00-12:00 p.m. at the University of Guelph.
 10:00-12:00 p.m. and 11:00-12:00 p.m. Info:
 523-2754

**SAVING THE SPRING: SPOKESWHEEL FASHION
 SHOW** Jan. 5-12/22

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 General. South Burlington. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 \$5 per person. Info: 498-3353

sports

WOMEN'S PICKUP SOCCER Soccer field and
 info. 10:00-12:00 p.m. at the University of Guelph.
 10:00-11:00 p.m. and 11:00-12:00 p.m. Info:
 523-2754

info

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 General. South Burlington. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 \$5 per person. Info: 498-3353

theater

CANADIAN THEATRE Jan. 10-12/22

CHICKEN THE MUSICAL Jan. 10-12/22

GOOD PEOPLE Jan. 10-12/22

THE JEREMY FLETCHER PROJECT Jan. 10-12/22

THE JEREMY FLETCHER PROJECT Jan. 10-12/22

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dance

The Lake Champlain Byway

Explore Vermont's West Coast



1. What is the Lake Champlain Byway and where does it go?

The Lake Champlain Byway is one of nine designated scenic byways in Vermont. A byway is a route or corridor that travels through an area that is rich in the varied, intrinsic resources of archeology, history, scenery, outdoor recreation, culture, and/or natural resources. The Byway corridor includes twenty-two communities in three areas: the Lake Champlain Islands, the greater Burlington area and park, Addison County. Its primary motor route consists of Route 7 and the Lake Champlain Islands, connecting with Route 7 via the Sandbar Bridge, and then down into Addison County where it connects with several smaller roads. The Byway is 165 miles long and takes about 3 hours to drive at a leisurely pace.



2. What communities are part of the Byway and who manages it?

The Byway's member communities from north to south are: Albion, Grand Isle, Isle LaMotte, North Hero, South Hero, Milton, Colchester, Essex Junction, Winooski, Burlington, South Burlington, Shelburne, Charlotte, Bennington, Vergennes, Putney, Addison, Middlebury, Cornish, Whiting, Threlkeld, and Orwell. Each community has identified attributes and interests such as public beaches, trails, and museums that provide opportunities for the traveler and/or desire to experience and understand the region.

The Byway is managed by the Lake Champlain Byway Council which is composed of three regional planning commissions, two regional Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations. The Council works in partnership with the Byway's member communities and others to coordinate and support projects that balance the promotion, preservation, enjoyment, and development of the Byway's intrinsic resources.

3. What are the Byway's assets and projects?

The Byway's assets are the sites and attractions located in the Byway corridor. In total there are nearly 500 desirable locations managed by municipalities, the state and various non-profits. In addition to these sites the Byway is also home to many private businesses that serve the traveler such as lodgings, restaurants, recreation services and numerous other businesses.



Improved information is a key goal of the Byway. It has installed links to all-outdoor related and parks and cultural interest information links and made markers. Ideal recently has portable toilet shelters were built in the Islands.

The Byway's website lakechamplainbyway.com is a tremendous resource for those planning a trip to the region and for those who already live here. The



site contains information on public trails, water recreation, historical sites, local museums and other attractions. The site is easily knowable by five main categories: History & Culture, Nature & Scenery, Outdoor Recreation, Regions & Towns, and Seasonal Events. The website can also be accessed by town or by activity such as swimming, boating, fishing, museum site, for a visit from Quebec, most of the site is translated into French.

4. When was the Byway created and by whom?

The Lake Champlain Byway was first designated in 1982. Over the years the Byway has grown as additional communities have received formal designation from the Vermont Transportation Board. Starting in 2003, the Regional Planning Commission worked to obtain federal National Scenic Byways Grant to fund signage and informational resources. The national Byways program was established by Congress in 1991 to preserve and protect the nation's scenic but often less traveled roads, and to promote tourism and economic development. Unfortunately in the fall of 2011, Congress did not fund the Byways grant program.

5. What does the future hold given lack of dedicated federal grant funding?

The lack of federal Byway grants has a clear impact. The Byway Council is taking stock of the projects and programs they've implemented and developing a plan for maintenance and standards. Our relationship with our municipalities is an integral part to sustaining the Byway Program. The work municipalities do to implement projects such as a scenic route, traffic calming, street and signage or more roads is complementary.



6. How can people get involved in helping the Byway and provide input?

One way to get involved is to volunteer on a committee (either at the regional level or in your town) that maintain and shape the future of the Byway. For the Chittenden County portion of the Byway, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) has formed a local implementation advisory committee. Over the next few months, the Committee will be reviewing the Byway's Corridor Management Plan.

The Plan will establish objectives to assure the sustainability of the Byway over the next decade. We'll be looking at the impact of the various interests involved in the Byway, such as the Regional Planning Commission, the Chambers of Commerce, the municipalities, and the non-profits who manage museums, parks and other attractions. We know that the Byway does not have staff or dedicated funding, therefore the plan is to ensure all parties involved mutually promote each other's interests, and that enterprise and educational programs are in place. Residents of the Byway's eight Chittenden County towns who are interested in participating in this committee can contact Dan Allen at dan.allen@ccrpc.org or by phone: 802-244-4995 x19.

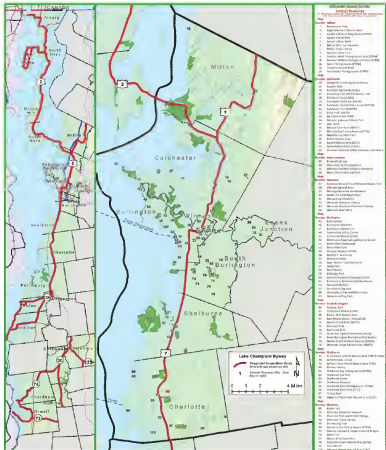


You can also like us on Facebook (just type Lake Champlain Byway into Facebook's search feature). We post special events, festivals and happenings along the Byway.

Last, we encourage you to visit the Byway website and share it with your family and friends who are visiting the area. lakechamplainbyway.com



Part of the Federal Highway Administration



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Location: 10001 West 10th Ave.,
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dreams

INTRODUCTION TO DREAMS
NOTE: Learn the fundamentals of dream research and explore the major tenets and methods used by Jung and other proponents of Depth Theory in this workshop-style course. Led by Lene Cillessen, Jr., major contributors to theory and education of A.A.P.C. Apr 7-14, 21-28, 7-9 p.m. Cost: \$60/person. Locations: Jurgens Center for the Spiritual Sciences, 33 Chaper La Montebello, Ind. See 264-7900.

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Redemption Songs

Glen David Andrews sets his sights beyond New Orleans

BY DAN ROLLES

The central theme of Glen David Andrews' new record is not difficult to decipher: Titled *Redemption*, his latest studio effort is a dedication to the talented trombonists and vocalists he met while he resided past. A native of the storied Tremé district of New Orleans, Andrews was practically born with a trombone in his hand, much like his cousin Troy Andrews, better known as Trombone Shorty. But unlike his accident cousin, widespread recognition has been slow to come to Glen David Andrews. He hopes *Redemption* will change that.

Andrews is reluctant to talk about his past struggles with drugs and alcohol, preferring to focus on the present. And why wait this new album is a scintillating blend of funk, funk rock and gospel that speaks clearly enough to both some major crossover. Day talent, including Jussika Neville, gospel singer Mahalia Jackson and Golectric's Ila Elkan. But Andrews is quick to point out that the album is not merely a "New Orleans record." "You'll find no mentions of 'St. James Infirmary' or 'When the Saints Go Marching In' here. Instead, *Redemption* offers a glimpse at a talent finally, and fully, realizing his profound abilities.

"This is a testament to my actual life," says Andrews from his New Orleans home in a telephone interview.

In advance of Andrews' show at the Rusty Nail in Shreve this Saturday, March 22, here is that interview and solo sobriety.

SEVEN DAYS: The new record, *Redemption*, implies you've been redeemed. In what ways?

GDA: I've been sober for the last 20 years to get where I want to go, and I'm excited to see it finally happening.

SD: Having spent so much time playing away has your perception of what success means changed?

GDA: No. I've always believed in a hard-work ethic and dedication. Nothing is going to come overnight. You have to work hard at it. And I accepted that at a very young age. I could see how much work it takes to be a professional musician and really break it.



SD: When you were planning the record were there specific people you knew you wanted to work with?

GDA: People who have been on the same journey as myself. Dean Neville, Anders Osborne, Jansson Ross, who is a Thelma Houston Award winner. He's a positive spirit and a wonderful singer. And he might be one of the best drummers in America. But I've never attended my records with guests just because they have a name.

SD: It's more that you're just friends with these folks as they play on your record?

GDA: That's mostly what it is. I've always wanted to work with people because we have been on the same journey and have something musically in common.

SD: Were you surprised by anything on the record?

GDA: My biggest surprise was Mahalia

Jackson singing on it. I got to listen to my all-time favorite gospel songs, whose lyrics I have on my wall. I got to listen to her voice on my record with me. That's the highlight of my year.

SD: Your cousin Trombone Shorty has been blowing up lately. What is it like for you to see him do so well?

GDA: I grew up playing music with Troy, and so everything he's doing we already knew he would do. He's just one of those people with God-gifted sheer talent.

SD: So you know he was special from the beginning?

GDA: He always had it. There was never a question about it. The day we were playing the trombone at 2 years old and was actually playing it. He could barely hold it, but he was playing it.

SD: It spoke with Troy a few years ago

and we talked about how New Orleans is a city steeped in musical tradition, but that the real tradition is that the music there is always evolving and changing. What are your thoughts about that?

GDA: Music has to evolve. Music has been evolving from the day it was created, from the drums in Africa to rhythms in Cuba to European instruments that all came together in jazz. If you don't like it, that's your choice. But music has to evolve.

SD: What are you listening to these days?

GDA: Right now what's on my turntable is a gospel record from like soul Tina Turner, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*. I don't really listen to CDs or music on the iPod. I like records, because every instrument is actually being played. That's not a drum solo, that's not a computer. That's a human being. That's what I like most about records. That's raw.

SD: Is there an idea you employed on your own record?

GDA: With *Redemption*, I had the opportunity to work with one of the biggest producers of all time, Lou Adler. So I berated myself to the process. I didn't want to do a "New Orleans record." That's not what this is. It's a national record. And I achieved that with the sound, the songwriting. I didn't let any suggestions in. But I was smart enough to take them in and use them.

SD: Was that tough to take a backseat in your own music?

GDA: Not at all. That's what it takes to succeed in this business. You have to take your message and probe and put it on the side. The problem in music is that most people don't see the big picture. They want to see it, they want to talk about it. But when it comes to creating it, they're full of bullshit. It doesn't have time for that. I've been in the game too long to want to be a big fish in a little pond. I want to be a big fish in the ocean. ☺

INFO

Glen David Andrews: Saturday, March 22, 8 p.m., at the Rusty Nail in Shreve. \$8

SOUNDbites

BY DAN BOLLES



Dylan Frazier

Monkey Shines

It's been a nice run for new venues and improved venues in Vermont of late. In the last 18 months or so, Burlington has seen the rise of Antikbar and Signal Kitchen — and, on the cusp of the former venue, closing and writing and yoga rig. These mid-tier bars have been bolstered by a massive expansion of the Slingshot Pavilion that has allowed the waterfront enterprise to open its doors to bigger touring acts. Beyond the Queen City ballb's, Jesse McIlwain's has helped recognize his music in Montpelier, while the newly reopened Rusty Nail fills a void in Stowe that elevates live music in that town beyond the typical après-ski bar band fun.

Understandably, these developments have garnered quite a bit of attention and buzz; good almost thank the North County Arts was a cultural black hole prior to Antikbar delivering us from our unhappiness, appropriately fitting jargon delirium. But I would suggest that the additions of these spaces have simply complemented and enhanced an already vibrant scene. To argue further that these new venues likely wouldn't be such wild successes without the

foundation that had already been laid by many of the area's longer tenured venues, joints such as Higher Ground, Nectar's, Radio Room and the Monkey House.

Because of these clubs, the local concertgoing public practically feels entitled to have cool music on tap every week. And so we do. While I love and appreciate the new spots as much as anyone else, I'd urge you not to forget about the venues that got us to this point.

Of all the Burlington-area venues, the Monkey House is perhaps the most unlikely to type. Prior to the recent development of Wacoosa as an emerging nightclub hub, the Monkey was more or less one of the very destination venues. With the snail of new restaurants and bars in the Green City, that's less the case now, as patrons might be more apt to drop by after dinner at Motley Loaves Co. or drinks at the Mule Bar. But not too long ago, most of us on the RTV side had to make

a concerted effort to cross the river. And the club often gave us good reasons to do exactly that.

For the last seven years or so, the Monkey House has been the epicenter for underground indie music in the greater Burlington area, filling a niche that other venues couldn't. The bar found a sweet spot with naturally roaming bands that were perhaps too big for Radio Room, not big enough for Higher Ground and outside the usual bar/cocktail or lounge like Nectar's and Club Monrovia.

In the justifiable excitement over Antikbar and Signal Kitchen — two nightspots that serve a similar demographic in the Monkey House — it's only natural that interest in the Wacoosa haven might wane a bit. But this weekend, the club will offer a potent reminder of why it's still one of the area's best places to see live music. And actually, it might be better than ever.

If you haven't been in the last couple of months, you might not realize that Monkey House recently underwent a significant renovation. Specifically, the stage has been moved from its original, rather cramped location by the front door to the back of the room. It is now both bigger and taller, which provides more room for bands to stretch out and better sight lines for the crowd. On a recent trip there, my girlfriend noted that it feels almost weird to have to push the stage to hit the resonances, since the whole audience can see you. But DJ owner that it is, he's not wrong: In those times when you're not here to leave during a band set and abruptly walk part the stage to exit, the point is, the new stage is a major improvement and should make shows at the Monkey House even more enjoyable. Like, say, the one this Friday March 31.

In honor of the spiffy new upgrade, the Monkey House is hosting a daylong reunion party on Friday, featuring some 19 bands and DJs. The DJ lineup includes ERIC PRALINER, HILARY HARTON, J. HARRIS, JASON ELLIOTT and SAM ELLIOTT. In addition to two sets that are currently tied for my favorite DJ albums of all

SOUND BITES BY DAN

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SOUNDbites

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 57



BRIAN LLOYD



NINA LLOYD

DAVE DAVIS, RYAN POWER, AND EMMERSON LANE & THE DRUMS. As always, I'm a sucker for good puns. And these are great puns.

As for the live music, the bill includes **BRIAN LLOYD, SHANE SHAW, MARTIN SMITH, PADDY BLISS, EASTERN MOUNTAIN TIME, THE HIGH BRIDES, and EMMERSON, to name but a few.**

Also, you told there may be pizza.

BiteTorrent

Talk about burying the lead. The really big news on the local front this week is that **WENDAYS** is ready to love with me I mean, why else would she announce a show at the Flynn Marketplace for Wednesday, July 3, which just happens to be my birthday?

OK, fine. It's probably a coincidence. What is not a coincidence is that tickets for the show, which is a benefit for St. Johnsbury's Community Arts, go on sale to the general public this Friday, March 21. So if you're looking for an early birthday present for this guy.

Speaking of summer concerts, last week we ran a post on the Seven Days arts blog Live Culture featuring a raft of updates and announcements on warm weather festivals and shows, including the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival, Waking Windows II, the Ben & Jerry's

Concerts on the Green series and the Friendly Gathering Festival.

We don't have space in the column to repeat all that stuff again, so if you missed the post, go check it out. In the meantime, here's a little summer music news that just came over the wire. The **new sound bites** will be playing this year's Champlain Valley Fair.

In a related story, the Goo Goo Dolls are apparently still a band. Who knew?

Welcome back, **WENDAYS**. Power and band are recently returned from an East Coast tour and will play a homecoming gig at Radio Beats on Wednesday, March 26. Naturally, a band coming back from a stint on the road isn't especially newsworthy. But I mention it because the last time Power played the Radio, several folks with ears I trust told me it was the best Ryan Power show they'd ever seen, which is saying something. After a couple of weeks on the road, I suspect the band will be in especially fine form, leading me to think this show might be one for the books. Call it a hunch.

Last but not least, the last two weeks of Soundbites columns have been pretty hip-hop-centric, which has been a nice change of pace. But if after all that you still haven't been moved to go see some local hip-hop, I'd encourage you to check out the Hip-Hop Highlights at Club Macmillan this Thursday, March 20. Presented by **MACMILLAN**, the showcase is a tribute to whomever you like, including the artists **BLACK TIE COOL, FORTNITE, CHURCH, MIAO GO, RUMR and host JACQUELYN Ward.** 32

Listening In

A guide to what's new and what's hot, from the night trackplayer to the new wave.

WENDAYS, *Radio*

FRANKIE PONY, *Day the Love*

FRANKIE PONY, *Day the Love*

SHANE LLOYD, *Day the Love*

SHANE LLOYD, *Day the Love*

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REVIEW *this*

Violette Ultraviolet, "exiles"

[SELF-RELEASED TO DIGITAL DOWNLOADS]

Drums and rhythm are the glue that holds music together. So what does it mean when you listen to a song and the drums make you feel as if everything is about to fall apart?

This is an album with many of the songs on "exiles," the latest release from Burlington's Violette Ultraviolet. The drums on the disk's new record—such as last year's *Love War What No EP*—are off-pacing, at least initially. They seem like a slappy afterthought by multitrackmastered and bounding member Rob Roberts. However, by record's end I found I will defend the songs all the same, stoppiness be damned. That got me thinking.

Here, the rhythms on "exiles" are better. This is likely because Violette Ultraviolet will often go into recording sessions all but week home and then use their first takes. But what gets lost from



the beat is found in the overall artistic aspect of the band's sound, which is an exploration of emotions on the verge of unraveling.

"Exiles" opens with "My Old Town," in which singer Jake Thompson belts atop a cobbling drum track. "They like it when you're down and out, they really like when they feel like you're going crazy like."

This pugnacity persists with "One More Sunset." Here Thompson admits, "I don't care 'cause I'm here to the core." It continues on the third track, "Dialogues," where Thompson riles on the tone of Kings of Leon's *Claudio Pollock*, rapped with the sedition of Billie Eilish. Even the guitar solo in "Dance" seems twisted, while "We" asks the question, "How not does my face need to be?" "Exiles" offers grand and wicked guitar riffs alongside vocals that channel an equally pained and worked Billy Corgan.

Thompson continues with "Black Tar," which has a chilling repetitionism denied by ruminational piano phrases. Throughout all of this, Violette's drums follow Emerson in telling the story of someone on the cusp of losing it all. The distress that permeates "exiles" finally climaxes with its last track, "Crimes." Here Thompson's voice breaks into a cathartic scream, signaling the intense or falling apart of music and emotion to end the album.

Ultimately, "exiles" is the musical performance of a psyche teetering on the edge of its own collapse. This is true of Thompson's lyrics and vocals, as well as the accompanying instrumentation—particularly Violette's drums—making the album wholly unified in musical approach and emotional condition. Still, the higher complement one can pay Violette Ultraviolet is to say that "exiles" offers us a fantastic 40 minutes of a delightfully deranged, lo-fi rock track.

"Exiles" by Violette Ultraviolet is available at violetteultraviolet.bandcamp.com.

MICHELLE MANAKER

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TOGETHER TO MAKE



Wooden Dinosaur, Rhubarb Wine

[SELF-RELEASED TO DIGITAL DOWNLOADS]

On "Talking About Death," the lead-out from Wooden Dinosaur's 2012 record *Squash*, songwriter Michael Roberts confronted mortality. As he wrote then, Roberts tackled an enormous question by looking for small answers. And he found them: "We're just ordinary people, we'll die we're no phan," he sang. "If I see some stars, I finally would cry." The implication being the more we learn the more we find to take the logic a step further: If you have life, then you have life.

Given Roberts' proximity for lyrical analysis and music, not to mention the magnitude of his philosophical quandary, that's hardly of a hasty conclusion. And yet it's perfectly reasonable. Prior to recording WD's 2010 debut *Nearly Lost Stars*, Roberts had undergone a sort of existential wanderlust, brooding in Magog in search of... something. But it wasn't about to come home and settled in Brookline that he began to understand what he had really been looking for.

Each of his songs over those has reflected a sense of clarity through simplicity. The vague, etheric expanse of *Nearly Lost Stars* gave way to the earthy yet playful



form of *Squash*. The band's new record, *Rhubarb Wine*, written while Roberts and his wife built their home, is even more grounded. As he puts it, the album captures "no big artistic statements" and "no cleverness."

Indeed, *Rhubarb Wine* is Wooden Dinosaur's most straightforward according to data. Recorded mostly live in Roberts' recently finished Brookline home studio, it returns the cozy feel of an informal session among friends. The opening title track reveals with pastoral serenity in Katie Truitt's languid folkie drifts above a lilting acoustic guitar.

"Rhubarb wine you turn from green to red/ every night I seem to find my bed," Roberts sings with a song, conversational lilt.

On the disk's "Society," Truitt parts her own girl-next-door cheer with Roberts' warm riffs. It's a reaching, understated ode to wandering and heartache.

"Walking Along" is a lighthearted stroll culled by a punchy hand drum section that feels equally parts New Orleans second line and community band. Wooden Dinosaur have always taken great care in the arrangements, so it's likely that the song's playful, disengaged air is

intentional. Even if it's not, it works.

Following an introspective turn on "I'm All Right," WD unveil the album's centerpiece, "Waves." The song is a slow-burning ballad that may owe some melodic lineage to Neil Young's "The Loner." Here, WD's horns frame Roberts' own halcyon musings with a contemplative tone that we above the song's shimmering foundation of organ and guitar.

After the contemplative haze of "Drugs," *Rhubarb Wine* closes on "Don't Make It Hard." It's a quiet benediction that finds Roberts asking for the soft touch of an emotionally content lover. "We can't make it hard to love you tonight," he pleads. Like many of the best moments on *Rhubarb Wine*, that's a simple yet loaded sentiment that cuts with held honesty instead of bygone cleverness. Perhaps Roberts is correct and his simplicity is not a grand artistic statement. But it's certainly a first, and one that makes *Rhubarb Wine* a simply remarkable album.

Rhubarb Wine by Wooden Dinosaur is available at woodendinosaur.bandcamp.com. Wooden Dinosaur play the Shanty Parade in Burlington this Saturday, March 22, with the Winchester Local.

DAN ROLLES

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Shade of Pale

"White Wash," S.P.A.C.E. Gallery

If noting is everything, Ashley Roark has to be feeling fulfilled. She's the curator of "White Wash," a group show that opened earlier this month at the S.P.A.C.E. Gallery in Burlington. "There is a beautifully serene quality of winter when there's a fresh blanket of snow on the ground," reads an introductory panel, "and here in Vermont, we are in the thick of it." Sure enough, more than 18 inches of whiteness enveloped Burlington soon after "White Wash" opened.

Curiously, only a couple of the 40-plus pieces in the show allude directly to snow. But all of them have been crafted with the pale palette that Roark used as an organizing element, and which she describes in her posted intro as "quiet, serene and ghostly."

Prints, collages, drawings, ceramics, photographs, sculptures and installations make up this diverse display of works by mostly young local artists. Their efforts vary in quality as much as in media. And that unevenness can apply even to pieces created by the same individual.

Roark herself, for example, is represented in the show by nine small collages of layered fragments of paper that have a crumpled, cluttered look. They're sturdy unlike the beautifully simple — and equally beautiful — array of more than 100 floral pins that she has pushed into a gallery wall to form a pattern resembling a constellation, or perhaps a flock of birds seen from afar.

Thin shadows cast by a spotlight on the differently angled pins produce an illusion of motion, making the tapered design appear as though it's stepping up and down the wall.

In addition to Roark's, "White Wash" contains another set of small collages consisting of layered shards — fabric

as well as paper, in this case — that seem altogether too busy. Frying, dangling threads give these half-done pieces an unkempt look that's no doubt deliberate but is still lacking in visual allure. Mely Radey, the maker of these woodblock-mounted assemblages, achieves a far more pleasing result with her graphite drawings on sheets of Mylar or polyester film.

These figurative but cryptic, enigmatic feature craggy drawn houses or persons in the foreground and faded, blurry images behind them. Radey produces this contrast between sharp and soft focus by covering one drawing on a sheet of Mylar with another. Because the material is semi-transparent, the under drawing can be seen barely through the sheet on top. The disjointed visual narrative that result from this layering technique leave a viewer more intrigued than baffled.

Two large pieces Roark produced in this fashion bear a resemblance to traditional Chinese landscape painting — except that on the top layer of one, the artist has drawn a 1950s American suburban family scene.

Moan and the kids all stand at a table while dad leans from his chair to offer a meal of something to an at home artwork.

Lorraine Reynolds, another artist in the show whose works vary radically in medium and subject, "How Heavy Is Your Heart?"

consists of an old, rusty table scale with heart-shaped balls of twine (white, at center) placed on and around it. Viewers familiar with Reynolds' fa and object assemblages will recognize the vintage readability and may find it engaging for a moment or two.

But they will find themselves more attentive to Reynolds' pair of prints on



Clockwise from upper left: "Void (Reverence Supreme)" by Emily Powell; "Whisper" by Lorraine Reynolds; "Unsettled Mind II" by Mely Radey



REVIEW

loosely bang on the sheets, titled "Whisper." An adolescent girl stands facing out in each of the table-topside panels. In the longer of the two, her head is cropped just below her nose, and her right arm is crooked across her waist. The girl's entire face appears in the shorter of the panels, but her left side is covered by her thick, uncombed hair. Her arms dangle at what would be her sides — if Reynolds had sketched the girl's torso.

Is she dead? Entranced? Either way, the prints give off the ghostly sense that "White Wash" promises.

Traditional skill is combined with modern material — Mylar, again — in Emily Perloff's line drawings of dried flowers. The meticulous, subtle shadows of the plants' stems and leaves in these large-scale graphite compositions make them look like low-reliefs. They appear to protrude from the chilly whiteness that surrounds them.

Off to the corner of the gallery, along with Roark's unified arrangement of floral pins, a small, circular white object sits atop a pedestal that looks like an inverted golf tee. The leading, twisting form is a cue to overlook. But if you pass it by, you'll have missed a glimpse into the future of snow.

Matt Hogg made "Moonbase" with a 3-D printer. It's one of the first works to emerge from Generation's under space that officially opens on March 20 at the annex of Burlington's Memorial Auditorium. Roark shows wisely in pairing "Moonbase" with her own extraterrestrial array. Together, they offer evidence that art doesn't have to pertain to attract an adoring gaze.

KEVIN J. KELLEY

INFO
"White Wash" is a group show in various media at the S.P.A.C.E. Gallery, Burlington Through March 25. spacexburlington.com



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Jen Francis

"Epiphany" comes from the Greek words *epi*, which means "place," and *phaino*, which means "to show" — the word denotes a powerful transformation between an individual and a physical location. Barre/Paris and Recreation planner Jen Francis spends plenty of time focusing on place, both in a professional capacity and through the lens of her camera. An exhibit of Francis' photography, collectively called "Epiphany," is currently on display at the Gallery at Burlington College. According to a gallery description, the exhibit "explores manifestations of love of place, sometimes unexpected, in settings containing simultaneously structure and monumental encounters and consider reactions, patterns, connections, cycles and becoming." The show spans 15 years of Francis' photography and her travels to several continents, and uses an unusual presentation method — images on movable tiles — that the gallery describes as "cosmos in between the viewer and the photo." A reception, postponed because of last week's snowstorm, is Thursday, March 20, 5-7 p.m. Through April 18.



Francis' work is a collection of images that she has taken over the last 15 years, and it is a testament to her love of place. The show is a testament to her love of place. The show is a testament to her love of place. The show is a testament to her love of place.

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GET PAGE 9

The Unknown Known ★★★★★

The *Boy of War* (2003) made with the great political documentaries of cinema. And Morris earned an Academy Award for his portrait of Robert McNamara, the resignation former Secretary of Defense regarded as the architect of the Vietnam War. The filmmaker's latest offers a sequel of sorts with its examination of another leader's tumultuous impact on history. This time, though, Morris attempts to penetrate the deceptions and delusions of Donald Rumsfeld as he lived his life by day then by a succession of media screens.

Reviewers have suggested that *The Unknown Known*, which will screen on March 24 and 25 at the Geena Weinberg Film Festival in Montpelier, 2011, as a film in *his* life. They note that Morris fails to reach his subject, to make Rumsfeld concede to having several delusions—as some cases, say, thoughts—about the role he played in creating and botching the Iraq War. The reviewer misses the point. The wholesale absence of honest appraisal, self-criticism, or contrition doesn't reflect the pattern's shortcomings. It reflects Rumsfeld's.

The youngest Secretary of Defense in U.S. history appeared by Decade (and there's a Chevy Chase joke in there somewhere) and

again by the older Don Rumsfeld, who has been called the *Boy of War*. Morris didn't say any more in the popular memory regarding how he would the possible of power.

Rumsfeld's idea of a rapping year is a particularly loose stopping account of the 2001 Bush-Joe Moore inauguration attempt, after which he and a Secret Service agent pushed the president into his house and threw themselves on him. The punch line? "Suddenly I have a scuffed coat. 'Hey, you guys are heavy!'"

Steadily, though, the movie begins and finishes with Iraq. On this topic, Rumsfeld proves in brevity an interview for the audience as for the director. Rumsfeld once after perfectly reasonable issue, Morris is deceptively disabused by the deceptions, word games and half-faced details of reality his questions that. The 20-year-old Rumsfeld's eyes twinkle. He goes that Chevrolet out, and he has the Iraq War. The viewer is to realize the Iraq War and grab him by the throat, despite it's true.

In a typical sequence, Morris suggests to the White House wanted the public to believe Saddam Hussein was connected with Al Qaeda and 9/11. Rumsfeld adapts a look of punishment. "OK, I don't think so," he replies. "I don't remember seeing in



BOOM! BOOM! Rumsfeld's political deceptions and delusions run deep through his account of governing in the Iraq War. Legendary documentary filmmaker David Morris.

the Bush administration saying anything like that." First, a clip of a report Rumsfeld gave conference—equal parts brooding and stammering performance—from February 2002. A reporter quotes Rumsfeld's statement to the U.S. that "Iraq has no WMD...and no relationship with Al Qaeda." And Rumsfeld Lincoln was short: "The Secretary of Defense says with a flourish."

Time after time, Morris backs Rumsfeld into corners. If the legendary diplomat's latest falls short, it's in his hesitations to go for the punch moment. Who knows why Morris held back? Maybe he felt Rumsfeld's provocations and empty rhetoric spoke for themselves. When confronted with the fact that Saddam didn't have WMDs after all,

Rumsfeld quips, "The absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence" with that trademark grin.

The *Unknown Known* is both erudite cinema and an invaluable historical document. When future generations wonder how we made such a mess of things in the Middle East in the dawn of the 21st century, they'll have a way to look back soberly self-entranced face and learn to Rumsfeld, treating the truth. It's a pretty picture, put on an immensely important one.

RICK KISHLAK

REVIEWS

The Wind Rises ★★★★★ Need for Speed ★★

Some boys want to fly planes. Some boys want to drive 180 mph. And some boys want to run above the desert in a custom Mustang headed by a helicopter.

Let's start with the first, least outlandish choice, the *Wind Rises* is the latest—and perhaps last—directional effort from renowned Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki. It's a semi-autobiographical story of aircraft designer Jiro Horikoshi (voiced by Joseph Gordon-Levitt) who follows the footsteps of a traditional house, with two great exceptions. First, young Jiro's career dreams of flight, which mature in master wings as he grows up, are a major part of the narrative. Second, the story is running at first chapters, in which the real Horikoshi's most famous creation—the Mitsubishi Zero fighter—would wreck havoc in World War II.

A mood of respect permeates *The Wind Rises*, yet it never directly depicts the wartime horrors that inspire that sentiment. To understand its stronger mood, the audience needs to know that the schizophrenia for which it bears stress—a higher, more efficient bomber—is a precisely the cause of his future infamy. Miyazaki is well known to look at airplane enthusiasm

and a protest, and in *Jiro's* story, his two persons collide.

The tension works itself out completely in *Jiro's* dream, where he converses with Giovanni Battista Caproni, the great Italian aircraft designer who saw his creations torn down in the First World War. "Do you prefer a world with pyramids or without pyramids?" Caproni asks Jiro, suggesting the latter design is in one's justification. The line, lost at the Great Pyramids creation, don't suggest their relevance.

Viewers may or may not buy that rationalization, but it's hard to deny that *The Wind Rises* stands like a pyramid in the world of animation. As always, Miyazaki's sweeping, hand-drawn notes make these digital counterpoints look visually. Whether the film is worshipping the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 or depicting a small remote town between Jiro and his future wife (Kaili Hara), an honesty about affairs in contrast to his free play questions about the consequences of *Jiro's* dream unfolds.

They Marshall (*Jason* Brady) has a driving ambition, too, and it involves driving. Lots of driving. Let's put this straight: *Need for Speed* is based on Electronic Arts' video-



BEHIND THE SCENES A lot of dreams of competing the idea and with accompanying legends in Miyazaki and Jiro's story.

game reveal the same name, but it's actually as strong as cook as on the popularity of the *Fast and Furious* franchise.

All the elements are in place. Our hero is a working-class joe who builds a wine-making, mechanical crew of mechanics and street-wise. He's a real-life mechanical whiz-kid—a dead bird, a prison ship—to fly off against a shiny polished white (Dwayne Cooper). And he's seen in CGI-coded automotive stunts as astonishing as they are stupid. If you seek a realistic racing film, this is not it.

The film's first act—the mechanics—does so, too long, and the members of Marshall's posse are so well differentiated as the *Fast and Furious* ensemble. Our hero enters on a high-speed road trip with racing teammate John (Gregory

Park), however, the pure goodness. Theirs' undeniable fact in watching the a locomotioned Mustang (dodge coupe) and our own highway machine. Never mind that the movie could be subtitled *Death Race 2004*, given that similar exploits in real life would mean hundreds of innocent casualties.

Paul applies his driving chops (well based on "Breaking Bad") to the moment, but to no real purpose. It's hard to see about Marshall's savings and redemption quest, when the characters in *Need for Speed* are for more outgrowth than Miyazaki's cinema. The clock makes for a possible high-speed diversion, but expect to forget it as quickly as Marshall's name into high gear.

MARGOT HARRINGTON

MOVIE CLIPS

NEW PLAYING IN IT

MEDIAN SPEED The video game comes to the screen, with a twist: Bob Odenkirk (Joey from *Scrubs*) is a video-game addict who's been fired from his job as a video-game addict. (PG-13)

NON STOP A high-speed chase movie that's not a high-speed chase movie, in which a high-speed chase movie is a high-speed chase movie. (PG-13)

PIGHERIA A high-speed chase movie that's not a high-speed chase movie, in which a high-speed chase movie is a high-speed chase movie. (PG-13)

ROCKY HORROR A high-speed chase movie that's not a high-speed chase movie, in which a high-speed chase movie is a high-speed chase movie. (PG-13)

SON OF GOD A high-speed chase movie that's not a high-speed chase movie, in which a high-speed chase movie is a high-speed chase movie. (PG-13)

THE VERMONT FILM FESTIVAL A high-speed chase movie that's not a high-speed chase movie, in which a high-speed chase movie is a high-speed chase movie. (PG-13)

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MOVIES YOU MISSED & MORE

BY MARGOT HARRISON



The Broken Circle Breakdown

It's a beautiful, saddest music in the world. This Oscar-nominated love story from Belgium might make you think so.

First, a local note: You can see *The Broken Circle Breakdown* on the big screen in Burlington over Thursday.

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presented by the Burlington Film Society, the Vermont International Film Festival, and Main Street Landing Performing Arts Center. Theirs March 26, 7 p.m., at the Main Street Landing Film House. \$5-6, free for VTIFF members.

The film opens with harp player Didier (Johan Heldenhuysen) and his Mayan band singing the standard "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" (Cherooten in this movie speak in Flemish and sing in English). The next scene, set in a hospital, shows us that Didier's circle will not be unbroken. He and his wife and bandmate, Elise (Wendie Bassem), are preparing their 7-year-old daughter for chemotherapy.

Movies You Missed is a monthly column in the Live Culture News. You can find it on our website, where you'll also find other news and information.



NEW ON VIDEO

AMERICAN VETERANS A high-speed chase movie that's not a high-speed chase movie, in which a high-speed chase movie is a high-speed chase movie. (PG-13)

ROCKY HORROR A high-speed chase movie that's not a high-speed chase movie, in which a high-speed chase movie is a high-speed chase movie. (PG-13)

SON OF GOD A high-speed chase movie that's not a high-speed chase movie, in which a high-speed chase movie is a high-speed chase movie. (PG-13)

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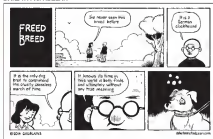
fun stuff

MORE FUN! STRAIGHT DOPE (PG) CALLED OUT & SUCKED (PG 4) & CROSSWORD (PG 5)

EDIE EVERETTE



DAKOTA MCFADZEAN



LULU EIGHTBALL



JEN SORESEN



Overweight research volunteers needed for a nutritional study

Healthy overweight women (18-40 yr) are needed for an 8-week NIH study of how the brain is affected by the type of fat you eat. Participants will receive all food for 8 weeks and \$1000 upon completion of the study. For more information please contact Dr. Ebenau (ebeneau@uconn.edu or 800-456-9933). Email is preferred.



Science Schmience

Christian minister Ken Ham's goal of building a replica of Noah's Ark in the Kentucky hills stalled for lack of money until Ham (no relation to Noah's ark) engaged in a debate on evolution with PBS "Science Guy" Bill Nye. Ham's answers to Genesis primary and the Creation Museum received widespread media attention during the debate, which pitted science against the Bible's explanation of the origins of the universe. Ham said that if a flood of dinosaurs would have existed at the Ark, he would be the first to begin in May and open to the public in summer 2018. (Associated Press)

Commercialized Airspace

As a dealership in Houston, Texas, hired a drone to film its latest commercial. "It's a good technique for getting shots that you normally wouldn't be able to get for advertising purposes, because you get a different perspective," Don Blazewicz, internet-digital marketing director for Mike Blakk Chevrolet, said. "It's tough to get a view out here with a camera on it." The lightweight unmanned aerial vehicle with six propellers is operated by JAM Aviation. "You know, people used to be scared of it," aviator Don Blazewicz explained. "Now they're saying, 'They that look like a UFO. Hey, that looks like a really cool piece of equipment.'" (Houston's KHOU-TV)

After a federal judge ruled that the Federal Aviation Administration has

no jurisdiction over small drones, a Michigan forest resumed using unmanned aerial vehicles to deliver fireweed. The FAA ordered Wesley Barry Flowers in Commerce Township to stop testing drone delivery, but federal administrative law judge Patrick Geoghegan declared that according to the FAA's argument for regulating drones, "to fight the air of a paper airplane or a toy balloon glider could subject the operator to FAA penalties." "The next step for us," Barry said, "is more testing." (Detroit's WWJ-TV)

SOME ADULT-FILM PRODUCTION COMPANIES TURNED TO COMPUTER-GENERATED IMAGERY TO DIGITIZE THE FLESH OVER THE CONDOMS.

Skulduggery

Authorities accused David Charles, 31, of flooding into the Indiana Medical History Museum numerous times last year and stealing human brain tissue, then selling it on eBay. A San Diego man who bought six pairs of the brain tissue for \$600, plus \$70 shipping, called the museum after noticing labels on the containers. After Indianapolis police investigators set up a sting to nab Charles, the museum's executive

director, Mary Ellen Hennessy Notzke, said the stolen material had been returned, and that she had spoken to the San Diego man. "He just said he liked to do that and things," she explained. (Chadsworth Star)

Virtual Solution

After Los Angeles County passed a law requiring parts actors to use condoms, adult film production companies fled to Las Vegas, Miami and other less restrictive locations. Facing remaining company relocations by turning to technology specifically computer-generated imagery (CGI), to digitize the flesh over the condoms. Gap porn company Palace Studios released the first digitally enhanced film, "California Dreamin' 1." "I wanted to give the impression of a pre-World War II," director Tony Dibravne said, "but use condoms to do so in every scene we film." (Slute)

First Things First

Nyssa Dorje, 38, was sitting in a New York City jury pool for a gun possession trial when he complained to the questioning prosecutor of chest pains and difficulty breathing, but when a court officer informed Justice Joel Wineschield, the judge told him to let the prosecutor finish his questioning. "There's a few more minutes left," the judge reportedly said. "They can wait." The officer decided that Dorje needed immediate assistance, however, and called an ambulance. Doctors determined he

was having a heart attack. (United Press International)

Hilley-Hole

Sherril's deputies responded to reports of a shooting in Jefferson Parish, La., found Keith Hilley, 38, with gunshot wounds to his buttock, leg and foot. When paramedics tried to help Hilley, he refused to get up and appeared to be "identifying his buttocks together," according to the police report. Authorities attributed his behavior to his injury, but a doctor who treated Hilley at the hospital retrieved a small bag containing 2.5 grams of cocaine from his buttocks. (New Orleans's Times-Picayune)

Everything You Know Is Wrong

A textbook used by more than 20,000 students in India's Gujarat state contains more than 130 factual, spelling and grammatical mistakes, including that "Japan dropped a nuclear bomb on the U.S. during World War II." The Gujarat government has withdrawn the book but did "set up a two-member committee to look into these errors and make changes immediately," according to State Education Minister Bhupendra Patel Chaudhary. (BBC News)

BLISS BY HARVEY BLISS



TED RALL



RED MEAT

continued school bus on memory loss

from the series **Bliss of Max Cannon**



THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



ELF CAT

A COMIC STRIP BY JAMES KOCHALKA

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CONNECTIONS

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CRAFTY WOMAN

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WOMEN seeking MEN

CREATIVE, CRAFTY FRIEND

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ENERGETIC, INTELLIGENT

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HAPPY, ACTIVE AND FUN

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HONEST, ATTRACTIVE, LOOKING FOR SOMETHING NEW

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JUST BE YOURSELF BUT HONEST

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LOOKING FOR MY DREAM GUY

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LET'S GO ON AN ADVENTURE

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OVER THE HILL

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PROFESSIONAL, VERY CREATIVE AND FUN

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JOINTLY A LOOK

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SEE DEEP POWER

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GROUNDHOG HIDE GROUND

I'm a writer and actor from Vermont. I'm looking for a woman who is intelligent and creative and who can engage in a conversation that is both fun and meaningful. I'm looking for a woman who is intelligent and creative and who can engage in a conversation that is both fun and meaningful. sevendaysvt.com



DO IT AT LEAST ONCE...

I like to create, discover, converse, share and play my way through life. I have a lot of hobbies that I keep myself occupied with, but all of them are enjoyed with great company. I figured this would be a good way to meet new people who like to do the same things as myself. I don't have trouble meeting people, but it's also one of my favorite things to occupy my life with. Let's do something fun. Meet! Have fun! sevendaysvt.com

I would describe my fashion sense as a mix of preppy, from suits and ties to sweatpants. I wear it all.

LOOKING FOR MY DREAM GUY

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ALL ABOUT MYSELF

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THINK OF ME

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EVERYONE'S DREAM GUY

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